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AND
LETTERS
AND A
BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION
BY ESTHER ROPER

WITHDRAWN

WITH PORTRAITS

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CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 1

THE INNER LIFE OF A CHILD . . . 49

LETTERS—

To Lady Clare Annesley 66

To Miss Wroe 78

To Mr T. P. Conwil-Evans 90

EARLY POEMS

From the German 103

A Love Song 105

In Praise of Liberty 106

Attainment 107

A Welcome 108

Prayer of the Modern Greek 109

Disillusion 109

An Epitaph 110

Rest 110

The Pilgrim 110

A Critic 111

The Musician to his Lady 111

From a Far Country 111

Drudgery 111

The Repentance of Eve 112

Joan of Arc 112

A Storm 113

Triolet 113

To —— 113

A Fable 114

To the People on Earth 114

A Spirit in Prison 114

Weariness 115

Promises 116

A Student 116

Jane Clermont to Byron 117

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preoccupation	117
Aspirations	117
An Author	117
An Old Story	118
Tricolor	118
A Discovery	118
Die Rheinbahn	119
A Politician	119
Dead Leaves	119
Morning Glory	120
A Nightmare	120
To a Poet	120
A Song	121
"An Idyll"	123
Song of the Fair Exile	124
The Exile's Return	126
Clouds	127
A Traitor	128
An Epitaph	130
Finger Posts	133
Hymn	136
Sonnet	137
A Soldier	137
February at Adare	140
A Choice	140
Sweet Peas	142
Lament	143
La Mort	144
Sonnet	144
The Abbot's Epitaph	145
Shut Out	146
Petty Larceny	146
Monotony	147
Transmigration—a Nightmare	147
From Bacon	147
To May	148
A Welcome	152
A Lost Memory	152
Spring in Manchester	153
After the Storm	155
Defeated	155

CONTENTS

PAGE

From the French (of Victor Hugo) . . . 156
The Philosopher 157
To Certain Reformers 157
Fallen Nature 158
Visions of Solitude 160
Finis 166

UNSEEN KINGS

Unseen Kings 167
From East to West 193
Grass of Parnassus 193
A Hermit's Lament for Maeve 194
To Maeve 195
The Harper's Song of Seasons 196
Lament of the Daughters of Ireland . . . 196
The Queen's Flight 198
The Waters of Life 201
The Wise Hermit 202
A Moment's Insight 203

THE ONE AND THE MANY

From Sunlit Meadows 209
The One and the Many 213
In the Pinewoods 213
The Eyes of the Blind 214
October 214
Peace 215
The Quest 215
Symbols 219
The Revolt against Art 219
From the West Coast 220
"The Great God has been released from Darkness" 220
The Ancient Wisdom 221
The City 221
A Dream 222
Influence 227
There is no Age 227
The Thistle 228

CONTENTS

PAGE

The Inner Light 228
The Ladders of Life 229
Aspiration 230
Time 235
The Truce of God 235
The Merciful Knight 235
A Spirit in Prison 236
The Weaver 236
The Desolate Army 237
The Land to a Landlord 238
To a Friend 238
From the Garden of Proserpine 239
"The Soul Attains" 243
Lis-an-Doill 243
The Little Waves of Breffny 244
Monna Lisa 245
La Pensée 245
The Lost Stream 245
The Place of Peace 246
Clairvoyante 246
The Travellers 247
The Proud Philosopher 251
The Incarnate 251
Proserpine in Hades 252
Proserpine Enthroned 253
The Body to the Soul 254
Re-incarnation 255
The Soul to the Body 257

THE THREE RESURRECTIONS AND THE TRIUMPH OF MAEVE

The Three Resurrections—
I. Lazarus 265
II. The Return of Alcestis 268
III. Psyche in Hades 269
The Unknown Good 275
Poverty 275
The Perilous Light 276
Narcissus 277
The Harvest of Silence 278

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Ecstasy	279
The Human Adventure	279
Tragedy	283
A Dweller by the Ocean	283
The Fall	284
The Goddess of this World	285
Andromeda	286
The Elm Boughs	287
The Artist	287
The Secret Spring	288
Reality	289
Forebodings	290
The Dreamer	291
The Sacred Fire	292
Death	292
Power	293
Heredity	294
The Caduceus	294
Magnetism	299
Beyond	299
The New Rainbow	300
Radium	301
Undine	302
Survival	302
Peace	303
The World's Thief	304
The Mystic	304
Immortalities	307
THE TRIUMPH OF MAEVE	309
THE EGYPTIAN PILLAR	
Roses	401
The Dark Valley	401
Freedom	402
Immortality	402
The Well at the World's End	403
The Throne of Osiris	403
The Street Orator	404
Women's Trades on the Embankment	404
The Good Samaritan	405

CONTENTS

PAGE

VAGRANTS 406
A LOST OPPORTUNITY 407
THE THRIFTLESS DREAMER 407
ON THE EMBANKMENT 408
WOMEN'S RIGHTS 408
HAVE PITY 409
COMRADES 410
ON THE CLIFF 411
THE FLAMING SWORD 412
THE VISIONARY 413
THE PASSAGE OF THE STAR 415
MAN AND WOMAN 418
RETROSPECT 419

THE SORROWFUL PRINCESS 421

THE AGATE LAMP

LEONARDO DA VINCI 465
SANO DI PIETRO 466
RODIN'S CARYATIDES 467
ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS (GHIRLANDAJO) . . 467
DAVID (BY MICHELANGELO: IN THE BARGELLO) . 469
THE DAWN (MICHELANGELO) 469
ANGELS OF THE INCARNATION (BOTTICELLI) . . 470
ATHENE (RESTORED) 471
SILENZIA (LUINI) 471
THE ANNUNCIATION (LEONARDO DA VINCI) . . . 472
ANGELS OF THE PASSION (BOTTICELLI) 472
THE EVERLASTING HERETIC (WOUNDED AMAZON) . 473
THE FISHERMAN (HOLMAN HUNT) 475
DIVINA COMMEDIA 476
LUCIFERA 480
FORM 480
THE INNER EGERIA 480
THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS 481
THE IMMORTAL SOUL 482
THE MAN WHO WOULD REMEMBER 486
SONNETS—
I. SUNSET NEAR THE ROSSES 489
II. THE HIDDEN PURPOSE 489

CONTENTS

PAGE

III. "Where Great Waves break" . . . 489
IV. The Lost Colour 490
V. Shells 490
VI. Waves 491
VII. Tragedy 491
VIII. Knocknarea 492
IX. By the Sea 492
X. Walls 493
The Vagrant's Romance 493
Harvest 496
The Anti-Suffragist 497
The Vision of Niamh 497
The Promise of Speed 498
The Romance of Maeve 500
"I" 500
Cleopatra's Pearl 501

BROKEN GLORY

The Age of Gold 507
Government 507
Easter Week 508
Heroic Death, 1916 508
To Constance—in Prison 509
Christmas Eve in Prison 510
To C. M. on her Prison Birthday 510
Roger Casement 510
Comrades 511
Francis Sheehy-Skeffington 511
Utopia 512
The Artist in War Time 512
The Lost Traveller's Dream 514
The Eternal Rebel 514
The World's Grief 515
Dreams 516
To C. A. 516
Pinehurst, 1916 517
The Little Girl's Riddle 518
An Experience 519
To J. W. in Winchester Prison 520
The Wood 520

CONTENTS

PAGE

Sacrifice 520
The Poet's God 521
The Submerged Apollo 521
These Three 522
To Dora Sigerson Shorter 523

UNPUBLISHED POEMS

The World is Round 527
A Symbol 527
The Tribunal 527
A Moment's Experience 528
Heimweh 528
Truth 529
Magna Peccatrix 529
Boredom 530
A Conviction 530
The Three Chords 530
Primroses, Wind and Rain 531
Joan of Arc 532
Caterpillar to Butterfly 532
Crucifixion 533

THE SHEPHERD OF ETERNITY AND OTHER POEMS

The Shepherd of Eternity 537
The Child of Prophecy 539
At the Waterfall 539
The Miracle at Cana 540
The Quest 540
The Chapel in the Forest 541
The Well where the World ends 541
Revelation 542
Life 543
The Descent from the Cross 543
The Acorn 543
In Praise of Life 544
Time 545
The Logos of Life 545
Santa Maria Maggiore 546

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Living and the Dead	547
The Mystery of Pain	547
The Hidden Beauty	548
A Builder of Rainbows	548
Comets	549
"We shall be changed"	549
Mary	550
Yesterday and To-morrow	551
A Prayer for Donkeys	551
The Divine Messenger	552
The Deliverance	552
"A Broken Stammer of the Skies"	553
The Inner Trinity	553
The Two Secrets	554
In the Temple	555
Τετέλεσται	557
Mercy	557
A Sunlit Cloud	558
Three-in-One	558
The Angel in the Garden	558
Sympathy	559
The Answered Prayer	559
The Singer	560
The Travellers	560
Eden and Gethsemane	560
Bartimeus	561
Nazareth	565
The Moon and a Lamp	565
The Inner Hills	566
Consider the Lilies	566
Florence (1920)	567
The Gospel of John	567
The Pilgrim Psyche	569
In Oxford Street	569
In Thibet	570
Apostles of Eternity	570
Three Ways of Love	572
Raising the Dead	572
A Madonna by Botticelli	573
Reality	573
Dysmas	574

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Glory of God	574
In the Dock	575
Peace	575
Water	576
Daisies	576
Tulips	576
Lilies of the Valley	577
The Winds	577
A Garden Grave	578
To a Lady—now Dead	578
Amen-Ra	579
The Fairest	579
"He that Wonders shall Reign"	579
Colour	580
The Consoler	580
God in the Trees	581
The Tulip Tree	581
To a Little Boy	582
To M. L'E.	582
Wrath	582
Judas	583
Size	583
Moonlight	584
Music and Words	584
The Roads of Mystery	584
The Meek	585
The Singing Bough	585
The Writing on the Ground	586
The Divine Image	586
Nemesis	587
Gentians	587
Christ in the Lane	587
The Seer	588
Old Age drawing near	588
The Wonderful Hour	589
Prayer	589
The Sunhine falls	590
Salvator Mundi	590
Secret Waters	591
Everyman's Glimpse of Heaven	592
"Yet a Little While"	592

CONTENTS

THE HOUSE OF THREE WINDOWS

	PAGE
The House of Three Windows	601
The Crucifix	601
The Hidden One	603
A Round Pebble from the Brook	603
New Year	604
The Reconciler	605
To E. G. R.	605
A Musician	606
That They may be One	606
The Disciple	607
Limitations	607
The Secret Sharer	608
The Criminal	608
The Last Kiss	608
Love	609
Enemies	609
Myths	609
Higher Criticism	610
The Mourner	611
Symbols	612
If One Knew	612
November	613
The Poet to his Ambition	613
Posthumous	613
A London Fog	614
The Miracle	614
At Pudseys	615
The May Tree	615
Saint Sebastian	615
Holy Rood	616
Poetry	616
They went forth	616
The Cross	617
Justice	617
An Illuminated Missal	618
To an Uncivil Acquaintance	619
The Divine Listener	619
The Question	620
The Philosopher	620

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Sacraments	621
Vision	621
Heaven	621
Lux Umbra Dei	622
The Eclipse	622
Ask, and You shall receive	623
The Ivy Leaf	623
Animals	623
The Legend	624
The Penalty of Perception	624
The Vision of Isaiah	624
The Test	625
Interrogations	625
The Masquerade	625
The Soundless Melody	626
Some Day	626
The Vision of God	626
All Souls	627
The River and the Wind	628
Leaves	628
Storm	628
The True Witness	629
The Puzzle	629
The One	630
Mountains	630
Epitaph—I.	630
Epitaph—II.	631
The Disillusion of Euripides	631
Fugitives	631
The End of the Story	632
Jesus and Mary	633
The Unconscious	633
The Good Deed	634
The Soul like a Watered Garden	634
The Magic Well	634
The Third Angel	635
Sabbath	635
The Third Poet	635
Within	636
The Method and the End	637
Force	637

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Opposites	637
Stage or Stable	639
The Unborn	639
The Revolt against Time	639
Youth and Age	640
My Creed	640
Three Consolations in Illness	641
After the Storm	642
Index to First Lines	643

ILLUSTRATIONS

EVA GORE-BOOTH, AGED 12		*Frontispiece*
		FACING PAGE
EVA AND CONSTANCE GORE-BOOTH		6
EVA GORE-BOOTH		46

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INTRODUCTION.

It is not possible in the space at my disposal to write a life of Eva Gore-Booth. I can only hope in this little sketch to indicate the background from which the poems stand out. This is but the letter; they are the spirit that alone can give life.

"On through the tumult of our fretful days,
From Life to Death the great song chimes and rings."

The Travellers.

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INTRODUCTION

Eva Selena Gore-Booth, the third child of Sir Henry Gore-Booth, Bt., was born at Lissadell, Co. Sligo, Ireland, on 22nd May 1870.

Lissadell is a place of haunting beauty lying near the point of Sligo Bay, between the heather-covered mountains and " the great waves of the Atlantic " :

" The foamless waves are falling soft
on the sands of Lissadil."

According to the peasants' stories the great cairn on the mountain of Knocknarea, not far away, is the burial-place of the High Queen Maeve.

Eva Gore-Booth grew up on terms of sympathy and friendship with the peasants. Her father prided himself that, however bad the relationship between landlords and tenants elsewhere, at Lissadell at any rate there was never any trouble. In a letter written to the Irish papers at the time of the Easter Week Rising, by a former secretary of the Relief Committee in Sligo, this is emphasized: " In 1879-1880 we had a famine in Ireland, and Relief Committees in every parish. . . . Her father, Sir Henry Gore-Booth, kept an open store of food at Lissadell, giving out meal, etc., to the starving poor, free to all, at his own cost, and I believe all the members of his family assisted in doing so."

Of the early years of Eva Gore-Booth there is unfortunately very little record. A remarkable fragment,

called "The Inner Life of a Child," has been found since her death. It gives a vivid and beautiful picture of her as a child, and is therefore included in this volume. She was devoted to her grandmother, Lady Emily Hill, and was absolutely happy when the latter read or talked to her, especially about religion. Her governess, who became her intimate friend, writes: "1882, when I first knew her, is 45 years ago, and I have no notes or diary of any kind. Eva was then, I think, 11 or 12 years old, a very fair fragile-looking child, most unselfish and gentle, with the general look of a Burne-Jones or Botticelli angel. As she was two years younger than Constance, and always so delicate, she had been, I think, rather in the background and a little lonely mentally, but music was a great joy to her. The symbolic side of religion had just then a great charm for her, and always of course the mystical side of everything appealed most. . . . Though her sight was always bad, she was an absolutely fearless rider. . . .

"We were a great deal at Lissadell with Mabel, her younger sister, while Lady Gore-Booth and Constance were in London, after the latter 'came out,' and we were very happy reading Dante together: Eva was of course presented in her turn and a good deal admired, but society of the fashionable kind did not, I think, ever appeal much to her, though she loved meeting congenial people and much enjoyed the great concerts, Handel Festivals, etc."

Even as a child she showed herself "possessed by a passionate adoration of beauty in all its forms." She was absorbed by the "inner things," as well as by the beauty of the world, and a tale is told of her that she once walked for days with small and sharp stones in her shoes without apparently noticing them at all, sensitive

EVA AND CONSTANCE GORE-BOOTH.

though she was: and she herself said she would sometimes ride a whole morning, and on her return not know where she had been.

Her governess says: "That wonderful part of the West of Ireland with all its legends and history which she adored, must have formed her mind more than almost anything. How her writings bring back memories of days spent by the Atlantic and the happy times when we tramped about wild places, and imagined all that had happened there in the old stormy days. Of course her pre-conscious mind was storing up so much more than we dreamed."

So she grew up amid the beauty of the world, herself beautiful. Mr W. B. Yeats, in a letter dated 1916, writes "your sister [Constance] and yourself, two beautiful figures among the great trees of Lissadell, are among the dear memories of my youth." She sought "the Hidden Beauty" in all things even then, but I do not think that she was very happy as a child. She seems to have been haunted by the suffering of the world, and to have had a curious feeling of responsibility for its inequalities and injustices. Once, when very young, she was found taking off her coat to give to a child by the roadside, and nothing could persuade her that this was wrong. She could not believe it right to possess what others had not. She studied conscientiously and read widely as she grew older, particularly English and German literature, and practised writing poetry and prose every day. She and her sister Constance spent long days together, the latter painting, and Eva reading aloud poetry, philosophy, history —indeed, any book of interest that she could find.

In 1894 she travelled in the West Indies and America with her father. There is a characteristic story told of

her on this journey, when travelling in a special train—the first to cross from the East to Vancouver after a terrible flood. Somewhere in the wilds the engine broke down, and they were for twelve hours stranded by the side of the line. The country was wild and desolate, without a village, farm or building of any kind. The other passengers got out books and cards, but Eva thought she would go for a walk. She was warned with equal impressiveness against the terrors of tramps and bears, whose traces were to be seen on the ground, but she slipped away with book and lunch into the woods. She walked on and on for several hours, thoroughly enjoying trees, flowers and butterflies. Suddenly she was aware that someone was following her; she looked round, and there was a tramp slouching after her. She hurried her pace because she wanted to enjoy things alone; he hurried his pace. Finally she plunged aside into the undergrowth and crouched under a tree with her book; she was deeply engrossed in it when she became aware of a face peering in at her—the tramp's. He asked her who she was; she told him: then he asked if she knew *where* she was, and of course she hadn't the slightest idea, being completely lost. It ended in his sharing her lunch and enjoying, as he said, the first conversation he had had with a civilized person for months. He led her back through the forest to the train, miles away. When she arrived she found the engine repaired, the train ready to start, and kindly search-parties scattering all over the land, looking for her, with dark forebodings. A friend, commenting on this story, said: " It has always enchanted me; it's such a lovely example of that angelic fearlessness of mind that was always hers."

The next year she went to Bayreuth for the Wagner

Festival, to Ober-Ammergau to the play, and to Italy to see pictures. In Venice she had an alarming illness and was advised to spend the next winter by the Mediterranean.

In 1897 she decided to publish her first book of poems. Mr W. B. Yeats, after reading the poems, wrote to her: "I think it is full of poetic feeling and has great promise. . . . 'Weariness' is really most imaginative and is, I think, in the mood in which you are most yourself. The last four lines are really magical."

Mr George Russell (A.E.) was also most generous in his appreciation. Julian Sturgis, the novelist, was a great friend of hers, and he introduced her work to Andrew Lang, who commended her poems to the editor of *Longman's Magazine*. Messrs Longmans, Green & Co. became her publishers, and their kindness and interest were appreciated by her throughout her life.

Jane Barlow, writing in *The Irish Times*, said: "Although George Eliot discouragingly calls prophecy 'the most gratuitous form of folly,' we venture to predict that this small volume, in its pleasant green covers, will some day be sought and prized by the collector of First Editions." In 1896, in the house of George Macdonald, at Bordighera, where both were staying, she met the writer of this sketch, who for two years after leaving college had been working in Manchester for the political and economic enfranchisement of women. For months illness kept us in the south, and we spent the days walking and talking on the hillside by the sea. Each was attracted to the work and thoughts of the other, and we became friends and companions for life. Very soon she made up her mind to join me in the work in Manchester. Her family had owned land in Salford for generations, and a cousin held the

family living there, but she herself did not know Lancashire. By 1897 she was settled in Manchester and was giving the greater part of her time to work for women.

Lancashire is the natural home of a women's movement. The majority of its cotton operatives, and also of its cotton trade unionists, are women. These women are amongst the most skilled and intelligent of the country's workers. In the early days of the Women's Franchise movement, Manchester had been its great centre. It was inevitable that the two movements, the political and the industrial, should come together. Eva Gore-Booth was one of those who helped to initiate this unifying change. We found from personal experience that "all schemes for industrial or social reform depend on the political power of their supporters." This is practical politics, as every trade-union woman knows.

The great problem of how best to secure for women a fair day's wages for a fair day's work was pressing for solution. Even in the cotton trade there was no equality of payment between men and women except among the weavers. The founding of the Labour Representation Committee, and the fact that then emerged, that in the Lancashire cotton trade unions the political levy was paid by 96,000 women and 69,000 men, caused women to realize their position, and early in 1901 women in the textile trades began petitioning Parliament for the Franchise. This was followed by women in many other trades and professions (teachers and Civil Servants, women graduates and others). In 1903 a committee of women in textile and other trades of Lancashire and Cheshire was formed to bring this side of the question before the country, and they determined to run a parliamentary candidate at the next General Election who should be

independent of all political parties, and pledge himself (if returned) to put this question before all others.

Accordingly, in 1906, the constituency of Wigan was contested. This was the first time that a candidate, independent of party and put forward by a women's organization, ventured to appeal to the electorate. The experiment met with great success in rousing the workers, though the entrance of a third candidate prevented the the return of the working-women's candidate.

Eva Gore-Booth and I were joint secretaries to this Women's Textile and Other Workers' Representation Committee, and she played an important part in all these campaigns. She wrote brilliantly on political and economic subjects and became a practised speaker.

In 1900 she had been appointed co-secretary with Mrs Sarah Dickenson to the Manchester and Salford Women's Trade Union Council, whose object was to help in the formation of women's trade unions. She became a close friend of her colleague in the secretaryship, and their combined work left a mark, never to be effaced, on the position of women in the labour world.

Mrs Dickenson writes: " I met her first at your office when she came to Manchester, and my first impression of her was her charming and interesting personality. When I knew her better I found how very genuine she was in all her dealings and discovered all the beautiful traits in her character. The friendly way that she treated all the women Trade Unionists endeared her to them. If she was approached for advice or help she never failed. She is remembered by thousands of working women in Manchester for her untiring efforts to improve their industrial conditions, for awakening and educating their sense of political freedom, and for social intercourse."

In all things she gave of her best. In 1904 the women's trade unions connected with the Council formed an independent body of their own representatives, and of this Women's Trades and Labour Council Eva Gore-Booth and Mrs Sarah Dickenson became joint secretaries.

It is impossible here to write the whole story of the movement. The next ten years were full to overflowing with organization, writing, speaking at large gatherings in all parts of England, deputations to Cabinet Ministers and to Members of Parliament. To this was added a new activity, when well-meant and ill-meant efforts were made to restrict women's labour in various fields. On different occasions, women pit-brow workers, barmaids, women acrobats and gymnasts, and women florists were successfully organized in their own defence.

For a time we ran a paper called *The Women's Labour News*, of which Eva Gore-Booth was editor. The words in which she announced " our new venture " give a vivid picture of the spirit and aims of our work: " Many are the difficult questions connected with Labour, many are the misunderstandings and confusions, many are the obscure corners of the industrial world, and many are the wrongs done in the darkness. Those who are working for the betterment of political and industrial conditions of women have great need of fellowship, of coherency and free discussion, and the ventilation of pressing grievances. The aim of this little paper is to light a few street lamps here and there in the darkest ways, to let us at all events see one another's faces and recognize our comrades, and work together with strong, organized and enlightened effort for the uplifting of those who suffer most under the present political and industrial system."

In her story of the Women's Suffrage Movement, Miss

Bertha Mason sums up the Lancashire work thus: "It was the appearance on the scene of action of this new and important force (women textile workers), the organizing of which was carried out by Miss Esther Roper, Miss Gore-Booth, and Miss Reddish, herself at one time a textile worker, which was chiefly responsible for the wonderful revival of interest in the question of the enfranchisement of women which marked the early years of 1900. There can be no doubt that this active and enthusiastic demand on the part of a great army of women who earn their bread by 'the sweat of their brow,' and not merely their own bread but in many cases the bread of relatives dependent on them, made a deep impression on Parliament, and caused many who had hitherto treated the agitation as an 'impracticable fad' and 'the fantastic crochet' of a few rich and well-to-do women, to inquire seriously into the why and wherefore of the movement."

Eva Gore-Booth was for a time a representative of the women workers on the Manchester Education Committee. Then she found a place in the University Settlement which we had just started in Manchester. She formed there a dramatic society for women, which did extraordinarily good work. The following account is given by Louisa Smith, a member of the class, who remained her friend to the end:

"We were a class of about sixteen girls. I think we were all machinists and we *were* rough. . . . We called ourselves the Elizabethan Society because we had no scenery: as we said among ourselves, we had no assets, but we enjoyed every minute of the rehearsals. We were very raw material but keen on acting; she showed such patience and love that we would do anything to please

her and she got the best out of us. After rehearsals were over we would give a show of our own, an imitation of what we had seen or imagined.

"If any of us were feeling seedy or worried about business or home she could always see, and showed such an understanding sympathy that we came away feeling we had a real friend. I remember one of the girls was very delicate and truly not really fit to fight the battles of life, and Miss Gore-Booth cared for her and sent her little delicacies, and took her to her own doctor, and in a hundred and one ways she cared for us. We thought she was a being from another world. I don't think I exaggerate when I say we worshipped her, but she never knew it, she was so utterly selfless. . . . She took us on picnics, and they seemed to be different picnics from any I had ever been to, so jolly and free, no restraint about them. She was also very keen on women's rights and trade unions. She persuaded me to join. . . . She was always sympathetic with the downtrodden, and worked and lectured might and main, interviewing Members of Parliament, etc., on their behalf till conditions were mended. She was very frail and delicate herself, but full of pluck and determination, and would stand up for people she knew to be unjustly treated, even though the world was against them, and with all so sweet and gentle that one could not help loving her."

In her trade union or election work the crowds at mill gates and coal-pits, even outside the football field, were to her full of interest and amusement. One of our colleagues, Mrs Green, tells a story of their going to a bleak hillside quarry for a meeting at a blacksmith's shop, and finding the men preparing to start a carrier-pigeon race, and how, in response to her friendliness, they invited

her to set free the birds. One dark and stormy night we had been holding a meeting in a poor and rather squalid street. When her speech was over a woman suddenly rushed out of the darkness, seized her hand and kissed it, vanishing again without a word. Young and eager, she was a gallant fighter for the poor and downtrodden, but a fighter without bitterness or personal feeling. Twenty years later this friend wrote to me: "I often read *The World Pilgrim* you were good enough to send me in remembrance of that dear one. 'The Unknown Lady' is just herself speaking to Giordano Bruno. I follow her words and hear her accent, and she being dead yet speaketh; so I read this chapter every week and she is beside me again."

Early Sunday mornings were given to the Reading Class of the Ancoats Brotherhood. The reading of some classic—*e.g.* Shelley's *Poems*, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, Emerson's *Essays*—would be followed by a discussion, which it was the duty of the leader to open and guide. Eva Gore-Booth held the leadership of the class for some years. Everyone took part in the discussion, and her gift of making them all feel friendly and at ease in discussing, was most valuable. Real friendships were made; there are people scattered about England and America who still look back to those Sunday classes with pleasure and long for their renewal.

Another friend (Elizabeth Parker), speaking of this period, says: "My first acquaintance with her was made at a meeting of the Manchester Women Students' Debating Society about 1899. I was the Secretary, a raw undergraduate in my first year. She was the lecturer. . . . I had not even made her acquaintance by correspondence. She read her paper, sat down by

me and proceeded, during the rather active debate that followed, to send me into suppressed ripples of laughter by the vivacious stream of comments which she whispered into my ear. At the close of the debate, a new planet had swum into my little world. I had made a friend."

During all these strenuous years she was writing continuously—poetry and prose. Some of her work appeared in *The Irish Homestead*, *The New Ireland Review*, *The Nineteenth Century*, *The Yellow Book*, *The Savoy*, etc.

She had never ceased to love her own country, and some of her most characteristically Irish work was done in Manchester. Her first volume, *Poems*, to which reference has already been made, was actually published in 1898.

In 1904 came *Unseen Kings*. This included a play on the death of Cuculain, together with some short poems which had already appeared in *Longman's Magazine* and *The Irish Homestead*. Of the play Mr George Russell (A.E.) wrote to her: "I congratulate you on your *Cuculain*. I think it is very beautiful and full of mystery. I always thought your imagination would incarnate finally in its best form in Irish subjects. Curiously, though, I had been planning out a drama in three acts on the death of Cuculain when your MS. came. I had no ideas half as imaginative as yours, I am sorry to confess. . . . I think your work would do admirably for the Red Branch Cycle performances we hope to have in the autumn here. I think your verse has increased greatly in power and there is a continuous swing or ecstasy in the sound. I am sure you will do many more beautiful poems like this now that you have found the inexhaustible well of the ancestral traditions of Ireland from which we can all

draw. . . . I feel you belong to the spiritual clan of new Irish people, some of whom write and more do not, but all know that Tirnanoge is no dream and that inwardly we are inhabitants of it and breathe a common air."

In another letter Mr Russell said: "I hope in the autumn, when there is likely to be a week of performances—Martyn's *Enchanted Sea*, *Deirdre*, revived (A.E.), *Kathleen ni Hoolihan* (W. B. Yeats), and *The Tinker and Faery*, by Douglas Hyde—that they will be able to get your beautiful little scene given too."

It does not seem to have been performed then, but later an independent company, founded by her sister, produced it at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. Mr Russell said of one of the poems ("A Monk's Lament for Maeve"): "This is one of the most perfect poems I have read of yours, and the sense of form grows. . . . I hope your next book will have many such poems. It will sing itself into the Irish heart."

Later in 1904, she published a collection of poems under the title of *The One and the Many*. It included the well-known lyric, "The Little Waves of Breffny," which she had written when on a short holiday at Lissadell, "Re-incarnation," and "The Body to the Soul." A well-known critic wrote of this book, in *The Manchester Guardian*, that it "contained one of the most beautiful things that any writer bar one in the new Irish movement has produced." There was in it, too, much of the mystery and poetry of the East and of the ancient religions, for she had been reading deeply and widely on these subjects.

Mr George Russell had written in 1902 of "The Little Waves of Breffny": "I am delighted with your poem. You have slipped into it at last—the Celtic manner, as

I always knew you could and would. It ought to be natural for you to do so—a West of Ireland woman and Co. Sligo at that. I hope you will do many more like it. Poems like that sing themselves into one's being and have a dear place in memory. . . . May I ask you to let us put this poem into the *Celtic Christmas*,[1] which we will be getting together shortly."

Katherine Tynan spoke of her as a fortunate poet. "She has written . . . beautiful poetry, and her 'Little Waves of Breffny' will go singing in the human heart so long as the heart answers to poetry. It is a small masterpiece."

In 1903 Mr George Russell (A.E.) invited Eva Gore-Booth and seven other young Irish writers to send him some of their poems. The poems thus collected he published with the title, *New Songs, a Lyric Selection made by A.E.*, from poems by the eight writers. In an interesting Preface he spoke thus of the work of the whole group: "The verses gathered here have been chosen from poems which appeared in *The United Irishman* and the *Celtic Christmas* . . . not only on account of the beauty of much of the poetry, but because it revealed a new mood in Irish verse. . . . My purpose was to show some of the new ways the wind of poetry listeth to blow in Ireland to-day. . . . I have hardly ever performed any task with greater pleasure than the editing of these verses. Among these new writers are names which may well be famous hereafter."

In 1905 she published *The Three Resurrections and The Triumph of Maeve*, a collection of poems and a play which had been written in 1902. The part relating to the Death

[1] The *Celtic Christmas* was the special literary number of *The Irish Homestead.*

of Fionavar was republished in 1916, with illustrations by Constance Gore-Booth (Countess Markievicz). Prefaced to the play is an interpretation of the Maeve myth by Eva Gore-Booth, in which she explains that "the story of Maeve stands to me as a symbol of the world-old struggle in the human mind between the forces of dominance and pity, of peace and war. The reign of the old warlike gods is rashly broken into and threatened by the fascination of a new idea. The birth of imagination, the new god of pity, is symbolized in the outside world by the crucifixion of Christ. A vision of this event is seen by Maeve at the moment of its happening, and becomes the turning-point of her life and thought. At first the glimpse of the new ideal is not strong enough to make any difference in her life. But Fionavar, her great joy in life, goes down to meet her mother returning in triumph from the fight, suddenly sees the death and pain of the battlefield, and falls dead, crying in bitterness: 'Is this the triumph of Maeve?' The effects of these events gradually cause Maeve to lose interest in fighting and ambition. In the end, without force or sovereignty, in loneliness and poverty, she finds the way into faery land—the way to her own soul."

The Irish Homestead remarked: "that Maeve retains her old dominion over those born under the shadow of her burial-place on Knocknarea is clear from the beautiful verses which are already familiar to readers of Miss Gore-Booth's work:

'The foamless waves are falling soft
on the sand at Lissadil
And the world is wrapped in quiet
and a floating dream of gray;

But the wild winds of the twilight blow
straight from the haunted hill
And the stars come out of the darkness
and shine over Knocknarea—
I have seen Maeve of the battles wandering
over the hill.'

The 'Lament' for Fionavar has the same charm that sings in 'The Little Waves of Breffny.' The drawings share in the spirit that breathes in the verse and give unity to the book."

In 1906 *The Egyptian Pillar* was published in Dublin (The Tower Press Series). Here we find charming little glimpses of her own working life. "The Street Orator" is the poet's version of a political campaign:

"At Clitheroe from the Market Square
I saw rose-lit the mountain's gleam,
I stood before the people there
And spake as in a dream."

"The Good Samaritan" gives some little idea of the comradeship she had among the workers:

"At evening in the sunset flame
Out of the mill the winders came;
She who with four great looms weaves
Found Justice fallen among thieves,
Stone-breakers resting from their toil
Have poured out wine and oil.
The miner hurrying from the mine
Has seen a flash of light divine,
And every tired labourer
Has given a helping hand to her.

The workman leaning on his spade,
Or the tramp resting in the shade,
The navvy who the roadway mends
These are our comrades, these our friends."

" A Lost Opportunity " describes her depression after speaking at a great deputation of working women to the Prime Minister (Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman) in 1906, when the depth and intensity of her feeling, little as she knew it, lent her words wings. The procession of poor and unemployed people, under " the great towers of Westminster," was the occasion of " On the Embankment." She was deeply stirred by the difficulty of getting redress for suffering and wrong, and her spirit turned with relief to the beauty of Glencar Waterfall, " where the living waters fall."

" Men have got their pomp and pride—
All the green world is on our side."

The introductory poem, beginning:

" One thought has been my whole life through
the soul of every dream,"

is a poignantly touching picture of her life, with its steadfast following of the vision

" I . . . dreamed ere my life began of the
deed I would do
When I had moulded the clay to the likeness of a
face,
With eyes that the tears ran through."

In 1907 *The Sorrowful Princess* was written at the request of two friends, for their school performance. It was given

in the woods at St George's Wood, Haslemere, by the girls of the school and published shortly afterwards.

Some years later one of these friends had a school in Sussex, and at "Pinehurst," among the children, she spent many happy days. The place she held in their affections is shown in an appreciation which was written for *The Pinehurst News Sheet*, by Helen Neild:

"Eva Gore-Booth was one of our most distinguished and delightful friends. She knew Pinehurst from its beginnings; from time to time she has stayed there—sometimes to rest and forget, sometimes to give us something from her wonderful mind, always leaving behind some virtue from her heavenly spirit. We knew her as a bright, undaunted personality, someone who seemed almost to float in like a frail flower petal, but full of fun and sunshine, pleased with the smallest thing, adoring colours, constantly sketching us and delighting in our freedom, and, like Socrates, courteously conversing with even the smallest of us, as if we were on her level. When she spoke to us of Leonardo da Vinci, or of Christ, as one who understood and was their friend, or when she read in her deep 'poetry' voice some of her own poems, we gained a little insight into what she was as an artist, poet and thinker-teacher. When her originality and genius is increasingly recognized we shall be proud to think that some of her verses were written here and refer to Pinehurst, and that we were privileged to see how the wonder of a lovely mind permeated ordinary life with something very beautiful and worth while."

A collection of poems called *The Agate Lamp* appeared in 1912. Mr George Russell (A.E.) wrote of it in *The Irish Homestead* that "the poems breathe the same eager adventure of the mind that inspires all Eva Gore-Booth's

work." He wrote to her: "I am glad to find you still can go on singing and keeping the high level in the heart. You have kept the spiritual alive, incorruptible and shining ever since you first began to write. I don't know how you do it."

In 1913 illness, caused by the climate of Lancashire, made it impossible for us to live there any longer, and reluctantly we left our many friends and went south, though we came back constantly for work.

The world war of 1914 brought a double share of sorrow to Eva Gore-Booth. She had always been a worker for peace of what is called the Quaker type, and she at once flung herself into the Women's Peace Crusade. We went up and down the country speaking once more. Ill as she was, she attended the tribunals and courts martial of Conscientious Objectors, yet no one could have felt more deeply than she the sufferings of the soldiers. Many a one did she help with her sympathy and understanding.

In 1916 the Irish Rebellion[1] of Easter Week broke out. Eva Gore-Booth had known nothing of it, but she loved her country deeply, and many of those who fought in the Rebellion were her friends, one of its leaders her own sister Constance. In their young days they had learned from the lips of the peasants the stories of Ireland's tragic past, and though one believed in the use of armed force and the other profoundly disbelieved in it, they were real friends.

Constance de Markievicz had been working for years for the poor in the slums of Dublin. From 1913 she had identified herself with the Trade Union Movement, whose leader was James Connolly. For six months (at the time

[1] An account of this Rebellion will be found in chapter four of *Last Changes, Last Chances*, by Henry Nevinson. (Nisbet.)

of the great strike there) she had, almost single-handed, run a canteen for the feeding of the starving children—collecting the money, buying and cooking the food herself. From that time on, industrial questions more and more occupied her attention. She was an honorary official of the Transport Workers' Union and an officer in their Citizen Army. (Later she was in the first Republican Cabinet as Minister for Labour, and did very able work.)

Eva Gore-Booth strained every nerve to help those in this country who were striving to prevent the taking of vengeance when the Rebellion was crushed. With our dear friends Gertrude Bannister, George and Margaret Gavan Duffy, Henry Nevinson and others we did what we could. But the " bitter struggle of the broken-hearted " was of no avail. A large number of the leaders, including her sister, were condemned to death. Finally seventeen (including, later, her friend Roger Casement) were executed, and her sister and others were reprieved to convict prisons. We were allowed to go to Ireland to visit Constance in prison the day after the reprieve, and arrived to see the posting of the notice of the shooting of James Connolly, whose splendid work for trade unionism and the poor in general we had always deeply respected.

Our friend Mrs Sheehy Skeffington was still vainly seeking news of her murdered husband, " the one who died for Peace." Mrs Skeffington, writing of that time, says: " She was such a rare fine spirit and she seemed to suffer acutely any wrong or injustice to others. I shall never forget her in those days after 1916, when she came over to see us in our desolation and to comfort us all she could."

In her little volume published in Dublin in 1918, called *Broken Glory*, are these lines:

" Grief for the noble dead
Of one who did not share their strife,
And mourned that any blood was shed,
Yet felt the broken glory of their state,
Their strange heroic questioning of Fate
Ribbon with gold the rags of this our life."

The dedication reads:

" In memory of August 3rd, 1916.
' For Love and the Voice on the Wind.' "

That morning Roger Casement—he who had brought " hope to the hopeless " and " light to the blind "—was executed in London.

Of these days no more can be said here, but from their effects she never really recovered. Their tragedy had caused the death of another Irish poet, Dora Sigerson (Mrs Clement Shorter). In a poem to her memory Eva Gore-Booth addressed her thus:

" You whom I never knew,
Who lived remote, afar,
Yet died of the grief that tore my heart,
Shall we live through the ages, alone, apart,
Or meet where the souls of the sorrowful are
Telling the tale on some secret star,
How your death from the root of my sorrow grew—
You whom I never knew."

We continued to work in the Women's Peace Crusade, and regularly visited the prisons in which were confined either Conscientious Objectors or Irish men and women who had taken part in the Rebellion. Unshakable

in her own deep convictions, she could always respect the convictions of others and admire their sincerity and courage.

A friend of international experience who knew her well wrote to me in 1926: "I wonder if revolt without bitterness, clearness of vision without pride, freedom without roughness, humour without mockery, were ever so exquisitely combined."

I quote from an account of her written by a young literary man: "It must not be thought that her pacifism meant merely submitting to wrong. People must gain justice by steadfastly refusing to accept less. She believed in courage as well as peace. . . . When I came to know her I realized how fundamental her peace opinions were, how much they were a part of herself and how they were the result of thought and feeling applied courageously to the difficulties and problems of life."

In 1918 she published a prose play, *The Sword of Justice*.[1] The story of Giovanni Gualberto, the Merciful Knight, is here carried on, after he has pardoned his brother's murderer. In the preface Eva Gore-Booth says: "Forgiveness has not improved the murderer, it has merely increased his opportunities for evil. 'Once in my life I obeyed the voice of God, and all this evil has happened because of it,' complains Gualberto. And I have imagined such an extreme case, because I do not think any truth is really true unless it will stand the test in our minds of any event that might possibly happen. . . . This little play is an attempt to show how life is for ever pushing and driving us on, with paradoxes and puzzles and hints and suggestions, till at last we begin sorrowfully to probe a little way below the surface of things, into that

[1] This play was produced in Tokio in 1925.

region where is to be found the justification for our truest and most beautiful thoughts."

The year 1920-1921 we spent in Italy travelling, from Rome, Naples and Florence to the hills above Lake Maggiore and the Riviera. She was extraordinarily happy to be there once more.

> " Back to the Lily town, the exile dreaming
> Of Peace long sought for, and the end of pain,
> Where delicate faces from dim arches gleaming,
> Colour the world with kindness once again."

Many of the poems in *The Shepherd of Eternity* were written at this time, but her absorbing interest was the study of St John's Gospel, and the writing of *The Psychological and Poetic Approach to the Study of Christ in the Fourth Gospel.* She learned Greek and Latin so that she might make her own translations and read any books—ancient and modern—from Tertullian to the latest textual criticism, that might throw light on her subject. Three years later she wrote to a friend: " The book is nearly finished, but I am doing it very slowly. I would like every word to be the absolute best I am capable of. That mayn't be saying much, but it's all one can do."

It was published in 1923. She wrote of it:

" One of the reasons for an attempt at a poetical interpretation of Christ's words lies in the fact of his method of expression. He does not reason and deduce and grope towards truth. He has the genius and the certainty of absolute perception. He sees truth clearly, face to face, and puts it into exact words. To help people to understand it he uses the metaphors and symbols of poetry. . . .

" Like the imagery of all poetry the symbolic language in the Fourth Gospel is mainly concerned with the common

things of everyday experience. Bread and wine, the growing corn, the harvest, the life of the vine, shepherds and sheep, eating and drinking, wind, fire and water—all the ordinary facts and experiences of a simple outdoor life become, at his touch, something greater than themselves, images radiant with the Divine poetry of eternal things."

A well-known Labour paper, reviewing this book, said: "Miss Gore-Booth does not regard Christ merely as a great ethical teacher. But though she accepts Him as the divine Son of God, she does so in a very different way from the conventional sense, and her arguments and conclusions are always irradiated with that 'inner light' and that poetic vision, without which any attempt to enter into the heart of Christ must necessarily fail. She has brought to her task deep sincerity, wide knowledge and (as all who know her poetry would expect) a spirit of exquisite sensitiveness. Her book will charm and help many who are repelled by orthodox creeds, yet thirst for springs of living waters from which they can drink and can be satisfied."

No words can better express her own intense longing in writing the book than this last sentence.

Soon after our return from Italy we settled in Hampstead. She cared as keenly as ever for every cause for which she had toiled in the past; the welfare of the women workers was always very near her heart. Her health made it impossible that her work should be of the same kind as formerly; but it was not for that reason any less vigorous or effective. Indeed, her insight into the problems of the day and her ideas for their solution grew more profound as time passed. It was only against the limitations of human power to sympathize that she chafed.

" I can hear but one dream crumble, one voice
cry, one sparrow fall,
Yet I can see a flock of birds, I can watch
a hundred wings—
Is there no man can feel each sorrow
and answer every call? "

This was her ideal—to answer every call.

Nor did her care end with the human world. She worked actively for the welfare of animals. (She was a vegetarian for more than half her life.)

" Alas for him who cannot hear the
dumb things cry,
How shall he see the Light Invisible? "

The meanest criminal was included in her comprehending pity. It was natural that anyone who had seen as much of prisons as she had should work for their reform. She was also an active member of the Committee for the Abolition of Capital Punishment. On all these subjects she wrote with the same rare power that she had shown earlier in industrial and political work.

In her poems, too, are everywhere to be found clear expression of her thought on these problems of human life. "The Secret Sharer" was written in deep appreciation of Joseph Conrad's wonderful story.

" Showing how love and pity once broke
the prison walls
Of personality, and love was strangely one
With the belovèd outcast—
. . . . . .

Deep in submerged and hidden caverns
of the heart,
These lovers of the sea have found the
Life of Life. . . .
We thrill to the great truth, we children
of the night,
And cannot see the Light of Light,
and call it 'Art.'"

She held that this method of self-identification or intellectual sympathy would, if cultivated in life, approach the ideal mental attitude. "The way of 'self' knowledge is the way of all true art and science—for it is the way of imagination, and the knowledge that comes from living a thing instead of looking at it. It is the way of love. It is also the way of Christ. If a man begin to identify himself with Christ, he will at the same time begin to identify himself with all life. This is what we call in art the creative activity of Imagination."

Perhaps the most intense pleasure she experienced in the last year was that which came from the study of Greek. A young High School mistress read some of the plays of Euripides with her. Going into the room late in the evening less than a week before her death, I found them deep in discussion of "everything in heaven and earth," as they said, "including the Greek idea of immortality." The poem, "Age and Youth," is a literal description of her last few months' work.

In 1925 she published *The Shepherd of Eternity*. In writing of this volume a well-known critic, "C.P.," of *The Manchester Guardian*, said she was "one of the most sensitively clear yet intellectually and imaginatively sure exponents of the mystic faith among modern poets. . . .

Though the poems are nearly all of a mystic or religious import, there is a universality and reality about them that widens and strengthens their appeal." A young literary man wrote to me: "The pagans are always grieving for the beauty that is passing, but to read her poems is to feel that the ugliness passes and the beauty remains."

This was the last volume published in her lifetime, but others have been published since. In 1926 *The House of Three Windows* appeared, with an Introduction by Miss Evelyn Underhill. Over the signature "C.P.," in *The Manchester Guardian*, was an article in appreciation of the book and of her communion with nature, as "close and intense as, indeed, it had to be if she was to get and give a vision of the world transcending nature and interpreting it. . . . Her conception of nature as revealed in this book and the other [*The Shepherd of Eternity*] is founded on her belief in the unity of all things, with life and without, the unifying force being Love. She celebrates it here in a short ode ["A Round Pebble from the Brook]," which, in contrast with the rapt tranquillity of the lilies' piece ["The Unborn"], goes like a soaring, singing flame. Opening thus, the poem gathers fire and energy to its triumphant close."

To follow the procession of her poems is to see and understand the story of her inner life, as Miss Evelyn Underhill shows most clearly in the Introduction: "Through this profound sympathy with nature, this deep love for all created loveliness, she obtained a rich variety of significant and concrete symbols; genuine poetic material, loved and chosen for its own sake, by means of which her mystical vision could be given artistic form. . . . An artist of this type, whose creative work depends so directly on personal experience, is bound to reveal in

her work something of the phases through which she has passed; and, indeed, the series of small books which contain Eva Gore-Booth's poetry constitute in themselves a chronicle of her inner development. There we see her innate sense of 'otherness' finding its first obvious affinities with the dreamy mysticality of Celtic poetry and legends, with their vague yet vivid suggestions of strangeness and power of evoking awe. We see her mind early disclosing the strong Platonic bent which it retained throughout its growth; the sense of the unsubstantial character of the manifold apparent world, with its 'shadowy unreal human things,' the unique realness of the immanent and yet transcendent One. We see the emergence of a spiritual outlook which might almost be called pantheistic. . . . In her later work we see the transformation of this Platonic spirituality into that lofty Christian mysticism which the present volume and its predecessor *The Shepherd of Eternity* express."

The sheer beauty, both of thought and expression, caused the book to receive recognition and welcome from her many readers. A critic in *The Times* wrote that in her later works she seemed to him to have "achieved a poise, a reconciliation of the poetic and mystical impulses which is completely satisfying."

Of *The House of Three Windows* Mr Henry Nevinson wrote to me: "It was indeed kind of you to send me our dear Eva's poems. How unusual and beautiful they are. I think there have been no such religious poems in English, certainly not since the early seventeenth century. I am not in the least religious myself, nor a mystic, but I read those poems last night till I could almost imagine myself both, the thoughts are so deep and so lovely."

The Inner Kingdom, published the same year, contains

Essays and Addresses. In an article dealing with the book in the Labour daily paper the writer says: she "was a poet with magic gifts, and her personality seemed to verify for once the Platonic doctrine that beautiful forms are the expression of beautiful souls. This little volume will be cherished for the light it throws upon her philosophy of life and will confirm an impression that her mental powers and her devoted use of them entitled her to a wider recognition than she ever received. Her belief in the absolute perfect and universal love of God, the doctrine of Re-incarnation, and the possibility of communion with Christ may have come by intuition, but these pages bear witness that her faith was established by severe and honest labour of the brain . . . . Those who are seeking a Christian philosophy of life, and seem unable to find it in the Churches, should receive much help from this book." No words would have been more welcome to her than these.

In 1927 appeared *The World's Pilgrim.* The best description of it is given in the article which appeared in *The Manchester Guardian* over the signature "C.P.":

"This, the third posthumous book by Eva Gore-Booth, could in neither its spirit nor its matter have come from anyone else. It is in prose, but there is here the same fusion of the thinker, the mystic, and the poet as in the poems. It presents, in the form of imaginary conversations between great figures in the history of religion, philosophy and art, some of which lie on the dramatic plane, the keys to her philosophy and her religion: that all life is one; that there is no escape from the Divine Light, the universal spirit; that 'the crying of the Inner Voice of the Divine Perfection' goes on alike in opposite characters; and that the third side to a controversy is

usually nearest to the truth because it has no opposite. What gives the dialogues the force of the truth that is great is the equipoise of intellect and universal sympathy that controls them: a sort of strong gentleness that has room even for satire, but a satire so benign that it becomes a grace. For the remarkable thing about the speaking of these diverse minds—Buddha and Pythagoras, St Francis of Assisi, Giordano Bruno, Lorenzo and Savonarola, Michelangelo and Pheidias, Lazarus, the Woman of Samaria, the three Marys, and Peter and John—is that it is always in character, and yet reflects always the mind and the spirit that are creating it, and these again express their quality in the beautifully simple phrasing and movement of the prose. Michelangelo, conversing with the spirit of Pheidias, calls himself 'the world's pilgrim seeking for the hidden springs of life and force.' Eva Gore-Booth, both as poet and as mystic, may be said to have found them."

Two more MSS. are ready for immediate publication.

The Buried Life of Deirdre is written round the tragic legend of the Harper's daughter, one of the great myths of the world. In this interpretation of it there are two contending forces—the force of Angus, the exclusive and possessive passion of love, and the force of Mannanaan, the freedom and universality of loving. It is in the conflict of these two forces that the evil caused by Deirdre's past life is worked out. This prose play was written in Manchester between 1908-1912. During the war, as a consolation while recovering from an illness, she illustrated the play. Unfortunately she left one scene unillustrated, or the whole would have made a beautiful work of art. All that can be done is to reproduce in the volume some of the finished pages—to show her work.

There is also a prose fragment on the Epistle of St John, which was written in the last few weeks of her life.

There are many other short prose works, either unpublished or printed in magazines. Some of these will be published later. There are essays, lectures and articles that have appeared in magazines, and a historical novel (unfinished) of the time of the invasions of Italy by the Barbarians.

The poems are all included in this edition.

Eva Gore-Booth's sensitive and loving nature made her a perfect friend. No words of mine could ever tell the beauty of her friendship, but I can say of it truly, "Love never faileth." Through years of difficult and trying work, through periods of terrible strain and grief, through ever-recurring times of intense pain, this was true. To the hard work which we did together for thirty years she brought a spirit of adventure and gaiety which nothing daunted. Of a gallant courage and a gentle courtesy she made life together a gracious thing. Even simple everyday pleasures when shared with her became touched with magic—wandering through the woods of her old home, or seeking the "blue gentians and frail columbines" of a Swiss mountain, or finding "beauty and life and light" in Italy.

She had friends and comrades everywhere and her greatest joys came through them. To exchange ideas with them on the things she cared for was an intense delight. Among her intimate friends in Manchester was Max Mayer, who set to exquisite music many of her poems; and these were sung by Alice Mayer. Theirs was a rare artistic comradeship.

Speaking of this time Max Mayer says: "About thirty years ago I had the good fortune to meet Eva

Gore-Booth for the first time at the rooms of a mutual friend in Manchester. She was then, together with her life-long friend and companion, Esther Roper, doing splendid and strenuous work for the improvement of the social and political position of women, a cause to which the two friends had devoted themselves with an almost unlimited amount of resource and energy and with rare understanding and sympathy. . . . Nobody who saw Eva Gore-Booth's frail and slender figure, nobody who came for the first time into personal contact with her charming, somewhat shy and elusive personality, could possibly form an adequate opinion of the amount of inflexible will-power and infectious enthusiasm that was hidden behind her gentle and winning manner. Nor could one guess that the same person who grappled so courageously and successfully with the vast and complicated problems of modern economic life, and the hitherto inferior position of women, would combine with this practical activity a most remarkable poetical gift, and that the political reformer and agitator was at heart a visionary and mystic of the purest and most lovable type. But on getting to know and understand her better, one soon found that the seemingly contradictory qualities were simply the natural outcome of a singularly rich and at the same time harmonious personality. There were no contradictions between her way of living and her way of thinking, there was an absolute absence of any self-seeking or self-assertion in all her actions, her courage never failed, because to her this earthly life was only a passing, though important prelude to something higher and more perfect. Her love for, and understanding of, everything beautiful, coupled with an exceptionally fine and original imagination and a sensitive mastery of

poetical expression, quite naturally made her into a noble poet, an artist 'sans peur et sans reproche,' and thus her whole unforgettable personality, her whole life and work, were welded into one perfect whole. Nothing disturbed the golden harmony and oneness of the different manifestations of Eva Gore-Booth's genius."

Her friend, Margaret Wroe, writing also of this period, says: "The first time I remember seeing Eva Gore-Booth was in one of the busy streets leading out of Manchester. She was reading as she walked, holding the book close up to her eyes, for she was very near-sighted. I have often thought that this incident was symbolic of her character as I knew it for the twenty-odd years of our friendship. She always left the world of incident for the world of thought whenever she had the least excuse. 'Don't let us talk about politics,' was a frequent introduction to a conversation, and then she would plunge into whatever was filling her mind at the moment: a poem she was writing, or the Ancient Wisdom, or Buddha, or Astrology, or Theosophy, and in her later years, almost exclusively the New Testament and Christ. She always gave me the impression that she was struggling to understand and explain to herself her own inner life, which she had come to believe was not a matter of one earth life, but of many, and through her own experience to find a key to the problems of the world. . . . Yet she was an artist as much as she was a seeker for truth, and so was closely in touch with the world of sense, but the outer beauty always brought the Inner Beauty to her mind; things sensual were to her something supersensual too.

"I well remember the first time she tried to model in clay. She modelled a little head (holding the clay in her hands without a modelling board), and it gave me a

thrill to see the head when it was finished, for one got an impression of something *universal* in the expression of the face, as if the Ancient Wisdom were speaking out of it. It was so utterly unlike any first attempt at clay modelling to which as a teacher I was quite accustomed. It was the same with every branch of art which she attempted. Imperfection of technique, of course, was there, but her drawings and watercolours had arresting qualities, and made one feel that it was only lack of time and opportunity that prevented her from becoming a recognized artist in several branches of art. . . .

" Her delicious delicate humour was one of her most attractive gifts; it was ready to appear in conversation on any subject however serious, and showed itself in little curves round her mouth rather than in her eyes. She was always thirsting for ideas. I remember well her saying on more than one occasion that there was no more exquisite pleasure in life than getting a glimpse of a new idea or new aspect of truth."

A letter has come into my hands, written by an acquaintance to a mutual friend: " I know how you will miss the remote and charming personality of Eva Gore-Booth. I saw her just a few weeks before I came away, in a bus. She did not see me, but I thought her then more like a being from another world. She was so etherealized that she gave you no impression of flesh at all. It was not so much that she was thin as that she seemed to be composed of other elements. And that was the impression she made on me when I met her, as if some one from another planet had strayed down for a brief visit. She would have made one feel grossly material in comparison, if it had not been that one felt the human affection that brought her into touch with the world.

Perhaps it is that rare combination of qualities—ethereal yet human—that best describe her and that gave her such a hold on the friends that knew her best. I have met others beside yourself in whose hearts she will always be enshrined."

Perhaps the relationship between the two sisters can best be gathered from Eva Gore-Booth's little poem, "Comrades," sent to Constance in prison, and the letter written by Constance de Markievicz to me in July 1926:

"The peaceful night that round me flows,
Breaks through your iron prison doors,
Free through the world your spirit goes,
Forbidden hands are clasping yours.

The wind is our confederate,
The night has left her doors ajar,
We meet beyond earth's barrèd gate,
Where all the world's wild Rebels are."

In the letter Constance says: "The one thing we can do to honour her is to make her work known, and help her to immortality here in this world through the ideals she lived for. . . . She has left a spiritual inheritance of love and peace to those who can understand, that can never die. . . . Her human presence was so beautiful and wonderful, but with her the spirit dominated every bit of her and her body was just the human instrument it shone through. It is so hard to put things like this down in a way that anyone can understand. When I was in Aylesbury[1] we agreed to try and get in touch a few minutes every day, and I used to sit at about six o'clock and think of her and concentrate

[1] Aylesbury Prison.

and try and leave my mind a blank, a sort of dark, still pool, and I got to her, and once I told her how she sat in a window, and I seemed to know what she was thinking. It was a great joy and comfort to me. When I got out, I lost this in the bustle and hurry of life, but now just the last few days I seem to get in touch again. . . .

" I had always had a funny habit since Aylesbury of referring everything that I was doing to her. Every sketch I made, I wondered how she would like it and looked forward to showing her them. If I saw anything beautiful I thought of her and wished she could be with me to enjoy it. I was always dreaming and planning to take you both away to some beautiful places in the car. I was writing a play and doing a copy to send her, and so on through everything, though I didn't write often—and then everything seemed to be cut off all at once.

" But lately I've begun to see and feel her often. . . . Last Sunday at Mass, when I wasn't thinking of her at all, she suddenly seemed to smile at me from behind the priest—and I know it's real and that she, the real Eva, is somewhere very near. . . ."

It was said of her by her friend and fellow-worker, Katherine Rowton, that: " One felt she had arrived at the point which most of us deplorably fail to get near. She lived in the consciousness of God, eternal things were the real things to her. . . . To come into contact with her was to be lifted out of the pressing and vexatious world of everyday life and affairs into another atmosphere, another world. . . . Eva was the kindest, most courteous and considerate person I have known."

It is possible to give only one or two quotations from the numberless letters that have come to me from all parts of the world.

A friend, Olaf Baker, says of her: "She had in an eminent degree that delicate craft of the spirit so infinitely finer than the rarest faculty of verse. Yet what the latter was capable of, shows beyond dispute in such lines as:

> 'The primrose has her gentle root
> A hundred miles beyond the sod,
> Deep buried in the Absolute
> Safe in the inmost will of God.'

Among much brilliant and what is termed 'virile' work of her contemporaries, hers stands apart in its vision of the spiritual values and of the eternal Being beneath the blatancy of time. Of all the people I have ever met in the course of my life, she seems to have had the largest share of that quality of spirit which burns away mortality like flame."

Miss Martha Sprengel, a lecturer on English Literature at Düsseldorf, tells me that for years, in her academical courses, she has been lecturing on Eva Gore-Booth's poetry. "Many people are deeply interested in her style and fervent admirers of her poetry, and," concludes the writer, "none have a more profound veneration for her than I myself."

Adelaide Priori, a friend whose music has so often brought pleasure to her, writes: "Faithful to her principle—always give whatever is asked—if anyone begged her to read her poems aloud she did not refuse. How those evenings stand out in one's memory—the silvery tones 'rising and falling in soft sounds everywhere,' the quick changes of expression in her eager face, the magic atmosphere in which one held one's breath, as one

followed the flight of her thoughts borne along by the music of her words.

" I remember the talks in between and afterwards, and her readiness to explain and discuss, and how natural she was about it all, so that when people understood and delighted in the poetry, waves of sympathy flowed to and fro and some of our enthusiasm was carried back to her. What Miss Neild says about Eva, that she talked with the youngest as if we were on her level, might also be applied to the way in which she treated the dullest of us. Just as her courtesy was the same to rich and poor, so was her mind ready to give its best to clever and stupid alike. She brought out the best in everyone, encouraging ordinary folk to express opinions, and listening with grave attention as if to something important. This of course enabled her to help them. She opened windows in many blank walls. She wanted to share everything. She brought us 'all her dreams.' She was among us as one that serveth."

Bessie Haworth, an intimate friend who worked with her for twenty years, spoke of her as " one of those people who never stop growing. Her mind was always reaching out to fresh fields of interest and developing in new ways. . . . She came to believe with wholehearted conviction that Christ's law of love was the only solvent of the world's problems. This helped her to attain to an amazing tolerance rarely found in a hard fighter, and in later years she was never heard to say an unkind word of anyone, not even of those to whom she was most vehemently opposed. There was never anything little or petty in her life, but she had plenty of humour to season its seriousness. Her life was a flame that burnt too fiercely for her delicate frame. . . . In contact with her one came to

realize how the most precious individuality is linked with the universal, and in how many ways personality, resting on truth, love and beauty, can be manifested."

A friend of later years, T. P. Conwil-Evans, writes of her: "It is difficult to write of one who was so dear and near to one as Eva Gore-Booth. Her friendship I count as one of the biggest things in my life. Meeting her immediately after leaving Oxford in the storm and stress of opposition to the war, I was doubly fortunate in enjoying her friendship then, a friendship which continued and which I valued more and more until the end came ten years later.

"How can one begin to say what one feels about a friendship which entered so wholly into one's life? My first impression I can never forget, because it was an impression constantly renewed at every contact: it was the quality of her mind: so Greek in its love of the beautiful; so really Christian in its love of everyone —the most humble were always the first to draw her generous sympathy: so eagerly daring in searching out paths untrodden by other thinkers. Truly a great spirit of the Renaissance surviving in this dark Machine Age.

"Little wonder that one's mind revelled in the richness of her thoughts, that were expressed with such irresistible charm. Always beginning with 'Don't you think,' never with 'I think,' she used to start off on one of those innumerable talks which I was privileged to have with her during so many years. Almost always during the conversational 'chase,' as she once named our talks, there was a moment when she arrived at some thrilling new angle, and ordinary things at once seemed to acquire an edge and a magic. Nothing equalled, nothing can

equal, the pleasure of those talks. They are at once the richest and most vivid and delightful experiences of my life.

" They ranged over art, poetry, music, drama, politics. How everything became living and real at her touch. A new world was revealed to one—a world vibrating with life and the secret of things. One's attempts to understand things in school and college seemed by contrast crude and laborious. Here was no respect for authority, no mercy for academic clichés, a mind adventurously free, swiftly moving here, alighting there, wittily tilting at conventional truths, turning upside down commonly accepted maxims, churning everything up. But one was not disturbed or cast adrift, one felt the hidden unity of her thought gathering up the broken threads. One always seemed to come back to the purpose of things—' Beauty —the form of God, Love—the will of God, and Truth —the mind of God,' as Eva Gore-Booth once wrote. It was the awareness of this that illumined her conversations, gave them that edge which one felt so often, whatever the subject talked about. It was the unseen reality flashing through her mind, something that made the listener for the moment mysteriously aware of man's destiny. Sundays in Frognal Gardens were great days, oases in the political wilderness of London, when I had the privilege to share with Eva Gore-Booth and her beloved friend, E. G. Roper, hours of music and poetry. Alas that these days can be no more."

My brother Reginald, who had always helped us in our work, said of her: " Many wondered that she was equally at home in philosophy and in politics, to them two such different activities. The really wonderful in her was her spirit, which informed her mind and her

body. It had the power of clear water, ' molto utile, et pretiosa, et casta ': it could quench a thirst, fall lightly on a blade of grass, or drive a tremendous dynamo of light or power. It made her gravely considerate to children: it sent her to speak in the rain in Rossendale: it made her translate afresh many passages in St John, do ordinary office work, help those who had fallen into the hands of human justice, and (in the highest sense) keep herself always fit, always ready. It was her spirit shining through her body which gave it that extraordinary braveness under pain. She had one belief, one theory, but she carried it into practice in all things.

" She certainly believed in the reality of direct communication with another world. One day she asked to speak to me, and gave me a message. She spoke to me of life, shyly and with her usual infinite consideration for the feelings of others, disclaiming any wish to interfere. She had not wanted to speak, she said: the only reason she did so was because Christ told her to. This was quite literally and simply meant, and I believe it, just as I would believe anyone who knew the way to London Bridge and told me how to get there. She never deceived anyone and never deceived herself: she had the scrupulous mental honesty of a scientist of the first rank, and knew the ways in which body might mislead mind into thinking something had happened. This was neither of mind nor body, but of soul: to me it was evidence, and I believe it."

She had a dangerous illness in 1925, to which she refers in " Three Consolations in Illness." No one who saw her when the pain was over, could ever forget the extraordinary happiness that radiated from her, as she

lay like a shadow, yet full of life, rejoicing in the talk of her many friends:

"Flowers all light and grace,
Roses that blazed out everywhere,
Cried of the kindness hidden in human hearts.

. . . . . .

Oh wonderful friends, your patient deeds and kind
Are the bright petals of the mystic rose
That grows where the world ends,
The tree of life a-glitter in the wind."

She never submitted to an invalid's life, and the end, when it came in 1926, found her, to quote Miss Evelyn Underhill once more, "ceaselessly and eagerly concerned with the adventures of the spirit."

A little manuscript book of about thirty pages was found beside her bed. She had named it "The Gate of Horn." The Greeks knew of these two classes of dreams: ordinary dreams, they said, came through the Ivory Gate, but true dreams come through the "Gate of Horn." This is a record of some "true dreams" she had had in her life, and of which she speaks in "The Inner Life of a Child." In explanation of one she had during her illness in 1925, she says: "Afterwards in answer to my prayer came the message of which the dream was perhaps a subconscious symbol. God has not called me yet because I was not ready for heaven. I was capable of something far better than I had yet reached. I had not yet filled up my own measure, as it were. As in the parable of the Talents, everyone is given a gift. You cannot reach Eternal life till your acorn has grown into an oak-tree. And my own limitations, the rigid walls of my acorn, were shown me clearly. God wants us in heaven—this was the message—

Eva Gouldsmith

nothing is spared to get us to grow quickly (without more incarnations). But the acorn cannot live in heaven, only the oak-tree. Therefore growth is the main object of Life, and it would not be real love to save from pain, if pain is the stimulus or in some way a necessity of growth. The acorn cannot become an oak without the destruction of the green walls of its beautiful palace."

Written under this in a shaky hand are the words: "Here then was a dream, and after the dream, a waking experience and a message." This I take to refer to an experience she had about a fortnight before the end, of which she spoke to me and to two other friends.

She had been lying on a couch in the garden all the afternoon, looking very ill, but not complaining at all, and planning to go away to see an invalid friend in a few days. We left her alone a short time. Suddenly she walked into the sitting-room, where an Italian friend was singing. He turned round on seeing her and said: "Eva looks as if she had been in Paradise—è piena di gioia—ha un'aria mistica." Afterwards she explained to me that she had been feeling very wretched that afternoon. "You know, I have always been afraid of death, and I could not get away from the fear of it. Then," she went on, "quite suddenly (as the answer to prayer so often comes) I heard the words, 'I will come to you'—slowly and clearly like that. I was almost stunned by the suddenness, and in my amazement and wonder could hardly believe for a moment. Then came the words 'I have promised—remember,' very distinctly. [She felt certain that this was "the voice" of Christ.] It was absolutely overwhelming. There was a radiance all around and I was filled with an extraordinary feeling of joy, the greatest I have ever known. Remember," she repeated

twice very emphatically to me, " I shall never be afraid of death again."

Death came suddenly, after two days of illness, on 30th June 1926.

She suffered terribly the last night, and suddenly said to me: " This is death." " Yes it is," I said, " but you told me you would never be afraid of it again." " Oh, no," she replied, " I am not afraid, pray that it comes quickly."

At the end she looked up with that exquisite smile that always lighted up her face when she saw one she loved, then closed her eyes and was at peace.

" The storm has cleared the air,
The sea holds the sun and the blue sky.
Suddenly, everywhere, shining, all things are one.
Is it like this when you die? "

ESTHER ROPER.

THE INNER LIFE OF A CHILD

THE INNER LIFE OF A CHILD

WHEN one looks back on the lonely moods and bewildering eternities of childish life, one is at once struck by the constant and almost rhythmic persistence of certain experiences. Time flows on through streams of monotonous orderly years, but it seems as if every now and then an Angel troubles the waters. The immortal events of the inner life shine to us out of the simple past. And however old we have grown since they happened, they are never without significance or importance for us, because they hold, undoubtedly, from birth to death, the key of our spiritual being. It has been said of the beautiful myths that build up the inner life of the childhood of nations, that they can defy all changes of thought and disbelief, because they have found their way into the world's subconscious being, and have passed long ago beyond all criticism to their fortress in the innermost mind of the race. So it is, too, with the first spiritual adventures of the individual. Closely bound up, as these obscure events are, with vivid impressions of the beauty and newness of the outside world, they sink deep down into the child's mind, and become part of our fundamental Consciousness for ever.

From an external point of view the events of childhood are small and unimportant, but it must be remembered that the soul is in herself the Way, the Truth and the Life, and it is often in passing through little events and insignificant circumstances that her radiance and power

is revealed. Her backgrounds are not necessarily great adventures or significant action. How many people are there who have felt their first fierce sense of hidden immortality in the silence that broods under the heavy boughs of fir-trees, or in the rhythmical mystery of breaking waves at twilight.

Very intimately connected with the inner life of my childhood was a little wood, that had once held a garden, and that was now so isolated from the world that it was called by us children St Helena. A great many snowdrops grew among the hemlock roots, and here and there the formal lines of white in the tangled grass pointed out the place where once there had been flower beds. The little ruined summer-house was covered with ivy. In the wonderful transition time between winter and spring, if you were lucky, you would find the crimson faery-cups growing amid beautiful delicate fronds of fern-like moss. It was here that a child came alone, bewildered and appalled by the sudden thrill of the first touch of the world's mystery. On that January day she had realized clearly and practically the fact of death, a fact that up till then had been as remote as the blue Galway mountains over the bay, that we only caught a glimpse of in the very clearest weather. Now the great, hardly conceived Idea had come very close to her, indeed it was towering over her head. As she stood in the cold wind, under the blue and sunny sky, shining above her in floods of transparent colour, she gradually became conscious of a strong intuitive feeling, a flash of sudden freedom and power, of strange happiness, an uplifting of the soul, a sense of something swift and free, of life in some world beyond the slavery of the senses, some æther beyond the air. All conventional impressions vanished, all half-understood

explanations, adapted carefully to the undeveloped child's brain; somehow she knew that this was something real, that the event itself was quite close to her, was explaining itself to her in an unmistakable intimate way. The deeps of consciousness were stirred, the spirit moved on the face of the waters. This she did not understand at the time, but she put it into clumsy words that half-shocked herself—"Now I understand it all, and it's delightful to die, and wonderful to think of anyone being dead." She was conscious of a vast comradeship, of unseen hands held out to her, of kindness, of power, of happiness everywhere. And then the glory faded, the intensity of life passed from her, and she began to look for faery-cups and could not find any, and the sky clouded over, and she went back to the dark child's world puzzled, and with a heavy heart.

When she was nine her grandmother died, and someone told her she had gone to heaven. This idea did not touch her, it seemed vague and unreal. All the same, she realized then for the first time, vividly, that some day she should die herself, and with that realization came the conviction that she should die quietly in her sleep, without great pain, and shock, which she feared more than pain, and that all was well.

Still she became very morbid over the idea of death. Her head became full of gruesome fancies which she thought of constantly, and often she used to lie in bed at nights, and touch her own hands, and wonder if it were possible that some day they would be a mass of decay. She became for a time obsessed by the physical idea of death, and a coffin was specially horrible to her; the idea of the absence of light and air filled her with unspeakable terror. But a little time afterwards as she lay in bed one evening a new happiness came to her. We children were

sent to bed very early, and it was broad daylight. Without any warning the child became suddenly conscious that a "door had opened in the air," and that her grandmother was standing beside her. Oddly enough, the child, who in theory was terrified of ghosts, had no thought of fear, nor did she even think it strange, she was simply delighted to be with her again. Again and again the spirit came. An instinctive reticence, and perhaps the habit of reserve, prevented her telling anyone at the time, but it was many years before she ever dreamt of questioning or doubting the actual presence of the dead woman. But confusion came with years and education. For a long time the child was bewildered by people who told her you could imagine outside happenings, that you must not trust your senses, because you could see anything, whether it was there or not, provided you imagined it enough.

How often has she lain awake on those same light evenings, trying to test this theory by imagining that the blind was up. It was a white blind, opaque enough to hide the green lawns and the twilight opalescence of the sea outside. In vain she used to lie and stare and gaze, and will it out of existence. Every evening, when the twilight faded into darkness, it still lay blank and shadowy between her and the outside world.

It was through this experience, that in her inmost self she gradually lost a practical belief in the power of the imagination to materialize what has no existence, and grew to look upon the faculty that goes by that name, as simply a subtler and keener perception of things that are really there.

At the same time a new power seemed to define and assert itself in her soul. In a dim sense, she became aware that the world was full of mysteries, untouched and un-

recognized by one's ordinary outside faculties. It was true that her imagination had no power to deal with a window-blind; on the other hand, she knew well with what mysterious certainty life answers to life. If she fixed her mind on the old nurse upstairs in the nursery, and cried out to her with her will and her imagination, she could almost always draw her downstairs to see her. She had never heard of telepathy, but amongst unseen things there must have been a strong connecting link of some sort between these two. The old woman died two years after she left us; the child did not even know she was ill, but she was warned by a very vivid dream of her friend's approaching death, and woke up to find her pillow soaking with tears, and was frightened, because her dreams often came true. A little time before, she had dreamed her canary lay dead in its cage, and woke up in the morning to find it had died suddenly in the night. Oddly enough these childish dreams that came true were nearly always about death. Since the child has grown up she has dreamt some true dreams about trivialities.

Mysterious as the whole subject of dreaming is, all her life she has found it very easy to distinguish between true dreams and false dreams, without waiting for life to prove or disprove them, not by their importance or relevance, but simply by the feeling of them at the moment, the impression they make on one's senses. One does not confuse an oil-painting with a coloured photograph. The Atlantic Ocean may glitter and swim before one's eyes in a Bioscope, but one is never for a moment deceived as to the reality of the show. The soul indeed has intuitions, senses that are never deceived by anything; deceit and show and semblance belong to a lower plane. If you can once get at your soul behind your brain, you will get at

the truth of everything. But the brain is the old deceiver, the confuser of issues, always able and willing to blind the eyes of the incarnate spirit with handfuls of dust. The dreams of the inner world are broken fragments of truth, brought back by the soul from her adventurous nightly journey amongst unseen things, and surely, by her at all events, they are easily distinguished from the dreamy confusion of the half-drugged brain, the sleeper's only organ of interpretation in the material sphere.

Greater and more impressive than the dreams that merely come true in this world, are the dreams that we know are true, and here we touch the fringe of a mystery that lies deep down at the foundations of our being. The things that we know are true—the wonderful ecstasy of the flying dreams that whirl us through the inner spheres, into one knows not what rushing star of rapture—the experiences of the inner life that we feel so deeply and strongly, that we could no more question their reality than the prize-fighter questions the reality of the blow that stuns him.

On a level with these dream glories, are a few of the waking events of the spiritual life. Great amongst these are those sudden direct flashes of insight, that are as if a curtain had been flung aside in the deeps of consciousness, and a radiant mystery revealed, whence waves of light and colour go reverberating down to the very end of our days. In one's childhood there are sunsets one will never forget, blue skies that never fade, Atlantic breakers that are immortal in their opal arches of green water, flashing with unknown light. There are twilights in spring, and primroses, and cloud-shadows that flit across blue mountains and green meadows, that are for many of us the true foundations of the spiritual life. And, strange

connection, there is swiftness of movement; the rushing mighty wind in one's face, the galloping horse beneath one, the sudden sense of freedom and power, that reveals, with a thrill to one's consciousness, the strange hope of the redemption of the flesh, the resurrection of the bodily element and its absorption in the towering personality of the soul. For once the spirit partakes freely and joyfully, without a sense of humiliation, of the hospitality of this material universe. Shall not in return the bodily element itself, in some far-away transfiguration, be a joyful guest in the inner kingdom?

Then there are the revelations of human vision and labour—the poem that one reads for the first time, the words never heard before, that thunder through one's brain like the voice that was as the sound of many waters, and waken the echoes in the caves of one's remotest consciousness. The sudden uncomprehended beauty that stares one in the face, leaves its mark for ever on one's soul. The child remembers once opening a parcel in the cold dark hours of a December morning. In those days she had seen very little of the world, and nothing of the beauty of art. Out of a bundle of brown paper and straw emerged a face, a beautiful white gleaming face, such a face as she had never seen in her conscious life; and yet in a moment a mad, struggling throng of associations, of dreams, of ideas, of thoughts jostled together in her mind. She was overwhelmed by a flood of new emotions. The door of all the mysteries opened in the air, and she is not ashamed to own that there and then she flung herself down on her knees by the school-room table, and prayed with all her heart to a cast of Apollo. Yet not to the cast, but to the Divine idea of beauty, the symbol of the conquering soul.

Truly the mystery of childhood is the mystery of association. The child's mind, that should be a blank as regards the past, is crammed full of the experiences of ages. The religious emotions of a thousand years ago will start to life at a touch, a chance suggestion, a hint from a passer-by. " They in the ages lying, in the buried past of the earth " who " built Nineveh with their sighing " are not really far from us. How swiftly do we travel over illimitable ages into the very heart of Greece, Egypt or Assyria, as the old rhyme has it—" We go to Babylon." " How far is it to Babylon? " " Can I get back by candlelight? " Truly the child soul is a great traveller, and can get anywhere that is or has been " by candlelight." There is no learning of second-hand facts here. All is vivid, all is present. A child knows only the present, it takes age to dream of the past. Much that has happened in the world has become to us myth or history. To the child it simply becomes part of life and experience, a significant happening amongst the other events of the inner life. In after life the mystery is explained to us by scientists. We are told that memories of the past still lurk in the immemorial clay out of which our bodies are made. But who can look at the forgetful faces of the dead, and not smile at such an explanation, and at the idea that memory is a property of the material body, transmitted from generation to generation, with no immortality belonging to it, except perhaps the material substitute of never-ending life. Such a dream may be acceptable to a mind bewildered by many years and the long disorderly processions of jostling material events. But the young are new to them, years mean nothing to them. Each day as it comes is a strange unexplored country, or perhaps only a new plaything. They are puzzled by our calculations

and arrangements; as little do they know of times and seasons as of the meaning of sums of money or the value of numbers. They are dreadfully puzzled by division and subtraction and addition and the sequences of life, and all those things that make up the working compromise of the spirit and the flesh. For with difficulty does the spirit within us, that belongs to the One and the Eternal, stoop to the comprehension of these matters.

Not without effort and patience and labour is the flesh raised to that order and rhythm that are the rules of its activity. In the midst of the confusion which surrounds our first pitiful attempts to unite the warring elements, no wonder the child's spirit thrills in response to the pride of those magnificent words that seem to hold the whole secret of life: "Before Abraham was, I am." This is the eternal and only answer to the first question of awakened consciousness—"What happens when I die, what happened before I was born?"

Among the spiritual adventures of childhood, there is nothing that brings us closer to the ante-natal mystery, than the shock of the child's clear, instant and untaught perception of abstract truths. By painful effort we learn the alphabet and the multiplication tables (vividly do I remember the struggle of nine times eight) and we form down-strokes and up-strokes and letters, and gradually get initiated into the mystery of writing. But in the midst of all this tedious toil to attain enough earthly knowledge to bring us up to the ordinary standard of life, and relationship with our surroundings, a great abstract truth is flashed out before us, and in a moment we understand. In a moment we are free of the Unseen World, its correspondences are ours, its facts are our knowledge, we grasp the Eternal and the Illimitable, we are once more

the Comrades of the Angels. The face of the new truth is strangely familiar to us, incoherently and dumbly we feel we are back in our old home with our ancient companions. Here is a language we have not got to learn, a science we know without studying, a philosophy we can perceive and grasp without reasoning, for the treasure of its wisdom is the secret buried in our own soul.

To a child's mind wisdom, truth and justice are as clear and apparent as the blue sky and the sunshine, and they are accepted in the same way as external facts that obtrude themselves on our consciousness. After one has once made the great compromise, and the soul has adapted itself to the needs of the flesh, and learnt the language of material life, the way of the spirit becomes more difficult, and our minds, confused by the succession of events and the seeming solidity of appearances, seem more easily to rest in the opaque, and to lose their grasp of the Abstract. It is easy enough to become the prey of inertia that gradually leads to insensitiveness, and thus to grow dead and unresponsive to the subtlety of spiritual vibrations. Then comes the kingdom of this world and the day of the blossoming of evil. For it is in the secret nature of things, that every little germ or seed in our personality must grow and develop and flower. Good and evil, just and unjust, material and spiritual, they grow together until the harvest. And the harvest does not come until the material desires and activities have flowered and flourished and faded, and the short-lived showiness of their appearance crumbles away into the dust.

The bodily life is indeed a strong element in our manifold personality. It will have its day. But that day is not often, as some have thought, in childhood. With many of us the material dreams and desires only come to their

full manifestation in middle life. We must wait patiently until these energies have spent themselves. In the fullness of time comes the harvest; the jungle and luxuriance of summer is past, and the ground is bare enough again in the autumn. The air grows keen. The soul awakes from her long acquiescence. She feels within herself the pent-up spiritual energies. Then the time comes when we want to renew our experiences of the inner life, to patch up our quarrel with the Unseen, to win back for ourselves a place in the Communion of Saints.

Thus does one strive to find again one's own soul and the visions that surrounded one in the enchanted forests of childhood before the hemlock grew. But alas, how often do one's thoughts sink down like lost children tired with their wanderings, and the robins cover them with a pile of autumn leaves.

LETTERS

THERE are unfortunately very few letters from Eva Gore-Booth. I myself have practically none, because from 1896 onwards we were rarely separated.

The letters she wrote to her sister in prison were little gems—short, as they had to be, full of colour and charm and gaiety, carefully written to cheer one who was "outcast from joy and beauty . . . bereft of raindrops on green leaves, bright wrecks of fallen showers," and yet "not outcast, whilst through your soul a sudden rapture thrills . . . and there are woods and primroses in the country of your mind." Constance Markievicz treasured these letters to the last day of her life, but, unfortunately, they were afterwards accidentally destroyed. Those published here were written within the last five years of her life, to three friends with whom she was in the habit of discussing all the subjects that most interested her.

To CLARE ANNESLEY

London, 1920.

My Dearest Clare,—What hard work you must be having,[1] and it must be very hard to keep up spirit or courage in the middle of such a despairing welter and breakdown of life. Your letters make one feel lazy and good for nothing, and a slave to flesh and psychic limitation! The squirrels miss you dreadfully on Sunday mornings. A very tiny infant stood in the middle of the path yesterday morning and remarked, "Oh, Mummy, how happy the birds must be now the trees have come out!!" And I felt there was some truth in it, the world gets lovelier every day at this time of year, one can see that, even in Regent's Park, and the new-mown grass smelt lovely. How lovely your picture cards are. It was very nice to get "über allen Gipfeln" but I fear there isn't much "Ruh" anywhere. I have been thinking and writing a lot about Eternal Life and St John's Gospel and Epistle. If the spiritual is fire, the psychic is water. Born of water and the spirit—the union of the psychic and spiritual—the water that springs up to Eternal Life. You suggested that "deliver us from evil" means deliver us from the desire of Reincarnation. Do read the part about the seed of corn dying and growing, that ends with—He who loves his psyche shall lose it, and he who hates his psyche in the Kosmos shall keep it to Eternal Life—I do love it, it seems to explain the whole idea of spiritual evolution (St John xii. 25)—the idea, that before it can become corn the seed-psyche must die (to its seed form) and rise again towards expressing itself as corn; and that thus the human psyche must give up its physical expression, and die to natural form before it can rise to

[1] In Germany, on relief work.

spiritual expression. As you might say, the acorn-psyche must die before it can rise again as the psyche of an oak —or the caterpillar-psyche must die (cease vibrating) and rise again as a butterfly-psyche. I suppose that was why, in the legend, Psyche had butterfly wings. It is a wonderful legend of the failure, suffering, toils and final evolution of the psyche of man, separated from and in the end united to God. How I am rambling on. I wish you were here and we could talk, but I have written a lot in the brown book.—You said in your last letter, was psychic will the same as nature. I don't quite know what you mean by "nature." Is it the whole natural Kosmos? or the nature of life? or nature—"she"—like Ireland-she, or England-she, the sort of personification of a muddle? Is what you call nature the expression we see round us? I imagine if our psyches die to the Kosmos and rise to Eternal Life, give up responding to psychic will and respond to spiritual will, it means giving up or dying to nature, don't you think? Whatever happens ultimately to the natural world, we certainly die to it, for the moment, when our bodies die. I am writing in Regent's Park, it's wonderful to come out of the Euston Road and be among the trees and flowers. This is a stupid letter with no news, but I will send it because when one is away any letter is better than none.

Ever so much love,

EVA.

HAMPSTEAD,
28*th December* 1923.

How lovely to get your Christmas letter and St John, Most Beloved Clare, and to hear about your lovely early

morning. The fir trees must have been heavenly. But they are heavenly here too, tearing to and fro in a great wind. I like your midnight Sun, it reminds me of the poem about Nicodemus who " at midnight talked with the Sun." I have been writing about " the Shepherd, the Beautiful One "—saying of beauty, that it only exists in so far as we respond to the three divine vibrations, Love, Life, Truth. When our response to Life fails, we have the ugliness of disease and death; when we fail in Truth, we have the ugliness of ignorance and falsehood; when we fail in Love, the ugliness of evil. But the Truth, Love and Life of God are Beauty. Truth is beauty, Life is beauty, and the Shepherd the Beautiful One is Truth—the Truth of God in Christ bringing Life Eternal. Love is the Door, it is the only way by which one should enter into any sheepfold or House of Life. The love of God in Christ is the only Door through which one should enter other people's lives—those who " climb up other ways " are thieves and robbers and come to kill and destroy. Love which is God, comes that they may have *Life*, and have it more abundantly.

" My. sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give unto them Eternal Life, they shall never perish, and none shall snatch them out of my hand." That is what the Beautiful Shepherd does.

Beautiful means so much more than good, there is something absolute about it, no striving, but the glory of perfection—the radiance of life.

I don't know why I say so much about the shepherd, except that you wrote about shepherds seeing angels. Yes, I do love to think of the Trees and Rivers going to Heaven—the Universal Psyche—the " New Jerusalem " —the " Bride."

" And Love was aglitter with sun and rain,
And the waves were a song and the winds a prayer."

There's nothing beautiful except God, and it is God in the trees that makes them so lovely. The same beauty and glamour in a human psyche makes something wonderful beyond our dreams—the Shepherd the Beautiful.

Much Love and Life and Truth and all Beauty to you for ever and ever, Dearest Clare. Yours,

EVA.

How we shall love to see you back; we try not to grudge you to Germany, but we are getting jealous of the Lorelei.

HAMPSTEAD, 1923.

DARLING CLARE,—How angelic of you to send me the little vase, and also to write. I wish you were here—the sun is shining in our little back garden, and everything getting green, and a sort of Easter feeling in the air—Life " rising up." The grapes were just in time for the Day of the Vine (Thursday). I have just been reading John xviii. It gets more marvellous every time one reads it. Your little St John is such a comfort, it's so handy and light to hold. The book is nearly finished, but I am doing it very slowly. I would like every word to be the absolute best I am capable of. That mayn't be saying much, but it's all one can do. I haven't written *any* poems, I have been concentrating on the book. I went to church yesterday, and they sang that heavenly thing about the stars of heaven and the winds of God, and the whales in the sea, and the lightning and the dew and the rain, and the green things of the earth, and the beasts and cattle and the spirits and souls of the righteous, and the holy and humble men of heart, and Ananias, Azarias and Misael.

" Praise ye the Lord, Glorify him and magnify him forever." It's such a glorious pile up of rapture. One felt all earth was going to Heaven! The new Jerusalem—" The Spirit and the Bride." And this time of year you feel everything responding to the call of the Divine Life that is Beauty and Truth. Thanks much for the pictures, especially *Orpheus*. I love Orpheus as Christ the Divine, Love and Truth and Life calling everywhere to everything that lives.

HAMPSTEAD, 1924.

DEAREST CLARE,—What a heavenly rhapsody of a letter, you can't imagine what a joy it is, full of almond blossom and blue skies and mauve anemones, and Salvator Mundi and everything beautiful and wonderful. It's so marvellous to think that *you thought of me at Syracuse*, it's like a faery-tale, and I feel what have I done that I should have the honour of being thought of at Syracuse, it's like being thought of in heaven! For Syracuse sounds to me like all romance—like Babylon or Damascus. How wonderful the sarcophagus must be. I'm going to Mrs L'Estrange on Friday, and shall take your letter and read her bits, it's so full of light and colour and delight. I do think snow mountains make one feel the reality of peace somehow. I loved your description of the catacombs white with almond blossom. It was like the end of *Faust*, when the angels throw handfuls of the roseleaves of love.

It sounds prosaic, but we went to see *Faust* at the Old Vic; the play, and part of the second part, and they ended with a scene in heaven with the Virgin Mary, the Samaritan woman and " Magna peccatrix," and others. It was very interesting and wonderful. They are rather fond of heaven at the Old Vic! We

saw *Everyman* there yesterday, and it ended with many hallelujahs, and heaven behind the scenes. But you've probably forgotten the Old Vic exists. So should I if I were in Syracuse. T—— read us her play last night. It is founded on the *Messiah,* and, at all the important points, somebody or some angel sings one of those lovely things. It's full of things about Christ. Somebody looks at the moon and says " Fancy, that's the moon that Christ saw in the Garden of Gethsemane." It's full of sudden remarks like that, in the middle of an up-to-date Socialistic vivid sort of play. The *Messiah* songs come in beautifully—she has also a strike and the Red Flag!! I wonder if you find traces of Proserpine? I always think she is the human soul caught in this world, and waiting for Christ to rescue her, and bring her back into the daylight. It was in Sicily that she lost her way and plucked the flowers of the senses, and got caught—Her mother was Ceres the earth-Goddess, who you say has now been transmuted into the Virgin Mary! In Sicily there was, I fancy, the mouth of Hades. How wonderful the old stories were, and they did seem to know that corn is holy.

HAMPSTEAD, 1924.

WHAT a perfectly heavenly garment, dearest Clare. Ever so many thanks—it's such a lovely colour and so warm and beautifully made. I feel I ought to give a party in bed. I am surrounded by all your lovely things, it was like having a visit from Botticelli's *Spring*! Flowers and fruit and air-balloons, and the lovely green garment that Venus might have worn rising from the sea, only in the other picture she didn't wear anything, not even a Wave, so it had to descend to Jonah! What nonsense I am writing. I'm dreadfully afraid I shan't get out to-morrow,

it's a great disappointment, though I'm having a gorgeous time in bed (spite of coughs) reading and writing and doing Latin. Your little Latin prayer books are a great delight. Have you got a copy of *Adeste fideles* in Latin? There are some hymns in one of your books, but not that.—I love the Latin hymns—I thought that you had it somehow, but am very likely wrong. It was a lovely idea to give me the garment now because "it's always Christmas!" I am much interested in the Latin Mass, there are some very joyful things in it—I like the poem very much. The idea of the Divine thing in everyone is so gorgeous, and everybody is really like Wendolin only they haven't found themselves out yet—"You *know* not what Spirit you *are of*" is such a lovely way of putting it.

Ever so much love and thanks and good wishes for this Christmas as well as for Dec. 25th.

EVA.

HAMPSTEAD, 1924.

DEAREST CLARE,—What heavenly snowdrops, they are indeed a joy. I enclose a little poem which is graced and adorned by their beautiful names, and therefore takes courage to seek out your tabernacle near the Stars. What an afternoon we had in the Albert Hall. I feel I ought never to stop thanking you and Händel, not to mention the writers of the words, and the performers, and even poor old Albert for having a Hall.

Much love and thanks. Yours,

EVA.

SILS-MARIA, 1924.

DEAREST CLARE,—What a joy to get your letter. I wonder if you've got my book yet? I asked Longmans

to send you an advance copy if possible. We are having a lovely time with your Brother Sun and your little Sisters the Alpine Flowers and your most beloved little Brothers the bright orange Butterflies, but were not at all sorry to miss your Mother the Thunderstorm and your Sister the Lightning. I expect the Guyon book is very interesting —the Caduceus belongs to Hermes, the messenger of the Gods (as also the Founder of mystical Greek pagan ideas). He shepherds the dead and takes them to Hades. There's a lot of symbolism in the Caduceus, and people don't agree. The top is from the winged Sun, and Hermes is supposed to come from Egypt—Some people say that it represents the Spiritual, the Sun with wings, and the rod and the serpents the psychic, but that may be just fancy —it would be worth looking it up in an encyclopædia of religion in the Museum, if you feel inclined and have time. —I shall be excited to see the script thing—perhaps Moses' staff was brother or first cousin to the Caduceus. The Rhine was lovely at Basel, so cold and fast; somebody was drowned that afternoon. They say the Ruhr business is ruining Switzerland, no tourists. I went to the Swiss church on Sunday—there was a very long sermon about being discontented—" Contentment," he said, " was the art of life." What price " divine discontent "? But I think he was anxious about Bolshevism! This place is wonderful—such meadows—we have been reduced to getting a little book about the flowers—Brother Fly is *entirely absent* and the place is alive with Sister Water—such torrents. I send you a watery poem just written.

Love from both.

EVA.

HAMPSTEAD,
14th May 1925.

DEAREST CLARE,—I wonder what you are doing and if you'll ever get this. We are having Spring at last, the trees are all shouting together and the Magnolia praising God in the Garden. I am sitting half out of (and half in) the window in the garden-room. The Crab-apple tree has come out, and the Tulip and Lilies of the Valley and Iris are just pausing on the verge before they make the plunge—I enclose a little poem—this time of the year is heavenly. How absurd to say all this when you are seeing heaps of wonderful new things—but Spring is always new like St John's Gospel and primroses. I wonder when you will get back. We are supposed to be going to Sils, June 20th, to see the Spring flowers in the mountains. It will be wonderful to have two Springs in one year! I wish you were going to be there—It does seem rather greedy, doesn't it? I have just put another little poem in. Indeed the world is full of lovely things; it's so wonderful to think of the Hidden Beauty behind and beyond everything. " He that abideth in Love abideth in God, for God is Love "—I am still revelling in the Epistle, and the sense of the reality and being of God, which seems to pour out of it. Then the triumphant end " This is the True God, the Eternal Life "—And then the gentle appeal —" Little children, keep yourselves from idols." How tremendous the idea of God is and marvellous, and how easy to lessen it. It seems the only real Idea in the world worth understanding, *the* Reality—there is nothing outside it. Please don't think this very tiresome, I am just rambling anyhow as I know you don't mind. I hope you are having a lovely time, and meeting beautiful people and seeing beautiful things. May the blessing of God the

All-merciful, Love, Truth and Life, be with you now and for ever! . . . They sang lovely things about Holy, Holy, Holy, and casting down golden crowns and Cherubim and Seraphim in church. It's so lovely to think of it as a rapture of Love, Truth, Life—Ever blessed Trinity.

Much love,

EVA.

KLOSTERS,
August 1925.

DEAREST CLARE,—I wonder how things are going with you. I've read about West Bristol, that will mean a lot of work for you I should think. This place "is full of living water." I enclose a little poem about the other night. It's lovely to hear running water while you are praying, it makes you think of Revelation. Hope you aren't overdoing yourself with too many meetings and work. Here it's very peaceful, but rains a good deal, lovely in the intervals. Anyhow, the hills always seem near heaven—which I suppose is childish, but "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" always appeals to me. I wonder how you liked Oxford, and if the services were lovely. We are thinking of going down to Gunten, on Lake Thun, when it begins to get chilly up here. I wish you were coming abroad, but suppose you are full of things. I have just been reading (in Greek) "the first man was a living psyche, the second a *life-making spirit*" —what a gorgeous thing to be.

Here is an epitaph—

"You took away my childhood"; "But to give you youth."
"You took away my youth—" "To give you the wise years."

"You took away my Life . . ." "Yea, but to give you Truth,"
"Life without falsehood, Love beyond these tears."

Of course the last gift is always the best, that's "*Progress*" (that Dean Inge doesn't believe in).

Ever so much love, how I am rambling, don't bother to answer if too busy, ever so much love,

EVA.

To MARGARET WROE

VILLA ANGELA,
SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE,
1920.

You will see from address we have landed in a little villa, most delightful. All the hotels were full. It's a heavenly place, a lovely broad valley full of wild flowers and delightful walks near Domodossola. You come up in a sort of breakneck motor bus. It is lovely to be right out of England, and so far from the Tottenham Court Road, and heavenly to sit in a wood and write for most of the time.

What you call my "Book of Thoughts" is growing very fat and bulky. There is great satisfaction in trying to express the *perceptive* foundations of your thoughts, as well as the thoughts themselves, those vibrations of life that one is specially sensitive to, and that account for one's own particular private way of thinking. I expect that everybody builds up their universe on much the same lines—on some special individual sensitiveness. . . .

Do you understand the Einstein Theory? I don't, but am interested in it, because it seems to me they are on the verge of finding out that you can know nothing really by material means, because every material thing you know of, including ourselves, is in a violent whirlpool of motion at different rates of velocity; and what a thing is when it is still (or even if it can exist in that state) what scientist knows? The Buddhist wheel of life was a good description of that Time and Space which even the scientists are beginning to realize as different aspects of the same thing! The only things one can really know are the same yesterday, to-day and forever, and are somehow outside the psychic and physical vortex.

I am sending you the first of what I hope may be a

series of articles in the *Herald of the Star*. My plan is to take one by one the fundamental religious instincts, such as " The sense of something wrong," " Sacrifice," etc., and trace and analyse these ideas in the different religions, shewing how they work out in the religions of power and the religions of wisdom, on the principle that in every so-called religion there are these two cults, and the real division is not Christianity, Buddhism, Mahomedanism, etc., but those who follow " the path of love and prayer " in each, and those who put their faith in organization and goodness and churches. I think the next ones should be more interesting, as I want to trace the universal religious instincts which come out everywhere. I did not choose the subject of my essay, but was asked to write something about comparative religions, but it's a very fascinating subject. Do tell me what you are doing—or, much more interesting—thinking. . . .

I am still immersed in proofs, trying to pull out the sting of my most unconventional remarks, so that I mayn't be responsible for any wars and fightings more than I can help. It is wonderful, as you say, the slow, absolutely gradual guiding into truth by infinitesimal degrees all one's life long. And how one feels nothing mental is great or small to Christ, or God in Christ, and every feeling or thought, of absolute importance. Life is a strange kind of mental dialogue, isn't it? I think that is why I like *The Imitation* so much. Thomas à Kempis seems to feel this so. And the queer thing is that every time one gets to know a little more, one gets a new and often terrific knowledge of how one's own response has failed. . . . It's beginning to be lovely here, the lilies of the valley in great fat buds and the magnolia on the verge of coming out, and our little garden looking so busy and living. I love

the intense silent activity of things rushing up and out to the light in Spring. I expect you are sketching. I hope so. There is nothing so happy in this old Kosmos as trying to draw and paint, and such a rest to tired nerves.

I have been trying to send you my first vol., but I am working at it, altering and modifying as I go on with the others. You see, certain thoughts have been held in suspense and only gradually worked out as the book has been written, without chart or plan, and has been to me a sort of voyage of discovery in a primeval forest. The mapping it out only comes after one is familiar with the country. I always hate letting things go beyond one's power of adding and improving.

Words are such very far-off symbols of the object that one perceives, that they can't give any idea to other people. It's like trying to build the New Jerusalem out of very bad and cheap children's bricks. In perception there is such amazing depth and subtlety and movement and rhythm of meaning, and it seems to scatter through one's fingers like sand, as soon as one tries to express it in words.

KINGSTON HILL,
April 1924.

I HAVE just found a letter which I should have posted long ago, thanking you for the *Blackwood*, which I read and returned to the Library as directed. I was much interested in it. It seemed so poetic, and symbolic of how one wants to live mentally. I couldn't rise to the Aquarius astrology I fear.

I never have any feeling of belief in the " Cosmic " sort of Astrology, though I do believe in the personal Astrology, minus the Cosmic Mythology that really belongs

to Theosophy, I suppose, and is so puzzling there. But I don't see anything at all unscientific in ordinary Astrology. It does not seem to me more strange that our psyches or psychic forms should be the result, in some way, of the terrific movements of those great magnetic bodies rushing through space, than that the moon should influence the tides—one cannot help feeling that there is a universal psyche poured out through the earth. Surely the stars may also have some kind of psychic vibration peculiar to them. Sometimes I think that our sense of proportion may be all wrong after all, and that the poorest little human soul is the tremendous result of all these whirling planets and huge half-alive magnetic substances tearing through space with enormous vibrations. Of so much finer substance is the psychic than the material universe. I am sure that science will soon find out that our bodies are the whirling result of the everlasting physical whirl of planets and suns and earth, and why should not our psyches be the result of the everlasting psychic whirl of worlds whose vibrations clash through space? Of course without the Divine Spark from God there could be nothing —neither psyche nor body—just as you might say that without the sun we could not live, and yet all life comes from God.

But I'm too stupid to-night to explain what I mean clearly. I wonder where you are. Thanks so much for the lovely card. I love Easter. Do you know Le Gallienne's poem about the Resurrection (in the *Oxford Mystical Verse Book*)? I love it, I expect you do too. I have been reading and re-reading the different Greek fragments of the Resurrection, they are indeed thrilling and vivid. How wonderfully sensitive and understanding these women were. I have nearly finished a book of poems, but mean

to keep it till after the Summer before trying to publish it. I have been dipping into Aristotle, and find that the *ουσία* of the Daily Bread phrase is used by him for Real Substance—Real Being, that which really exists. Words are extraordinarily interesting things. I must go to bed. I am scribbling instead of doing my hair, as my hairbrush has fallen out of the window where it was drying, and it will have to wait on the grass till morning, when I've no doubt it will be covered with Ladybirds!!

HAMPSTEAD,
October 1923.

WHAT a lovely long interesting letter. I am so pleased you are interested in my book, and specially grateful for what you say of the part about the divinity of Christ.

I am interested that you go for the point that puzzled me for years about the psyche dying. I know it is a much more attractive idea to most people that it is necessarily immortal and changeless. But I do not think this is *true*.

But to save people from this death is, I think, the extraordinary adventure of Christ. I think the child's psyche is new and yet old, because it is the child of its past will, and therefore it has the very character it has made. I believe there is a death that is sleep, and there is a death that is a rising to eternal life. I do not believe that discarnate human beings are wandering about getting into communication. I think they sleep and are born again, and become conscious as babies. This is what seems to me different from the theosophical theory of reincarnation, that Christ is always warning people of the danger of "death"—not hell or pain—and offering them

" Eternal Life." I think losing " your psyche for Christ's sake " is like hating it in the Kosmos, and it helps you to find it and to keep it to Eternal Life. It is a quite different loss, this losing to keep, from the loss spoken of in St John v. 26, " For what shall a man profit if he gain the whole world and forfeit his own psyche." To lose your psyche *for the sake of keeping it* is a wholly different idea to losing or forfeiting it. In the first sense, Christ laid down his psyche that he might take it again. But in the second sense, the real loss is the great disaster that he is always warning people of. After all, if there is no newness in one's psyche, why should one be a baby? Why should one not be just as conscious as one was in one's last life? There is a gap and a blank, for all memories of the past lives do not seem like ordinary memories, they are a sort of light flashed in. The physical body is so neutral; it alone dying could not cut the connection. We do not mind this death because it is only like a sleep and we wake alive again—part the same and part different.

HAMPSTEAD,
November 1924.

How good of you to write. It was a great cheer to get your letter, however blighted in tone, as I was feeling also rather blighted—the laryngitis was very painful as usual, but I'm much better now. I got a doctor who seems to do the right thing for it. Last time I went to Church I was greatly cheered because they played a Funeral March of Beethoven's at the end! Honestly it made me feel very joyful, not of course for the negative side of it—Death, but the hint of Joy to be revealed, the wonderful hope there is in everything. I have been reading Vaughan's

poems. I do love the Nicodemus one. Do you remember "Bright Shoots of Everlastingness", he has such sudden lovely phrases.

Longmans are doing my poems. Mr C. J. L. wrote me an awfully nice letter about them, had read them himself and praised them.

I rather envy the people who think you can get outside your body and walk about loose! Still I suppose, as in the past, the Lord has need of Brother Ass or we shouldn't be bothered with it. I, by the way, was reading that story with great joy about the donkey, and Christ's words: "Loose him and bring him to me, and if any man say aught unto thee, say the Lord hath need of him." I love to think Christ has need of animals as well as people. "The Lord has need of him" is such a lovely answer to vivisectors, and those who think animals were made for man's convenience. My ink is failing!

KLOSTERS, 1925.

YOUR letter struck a very responsive chord in me. It is so true how one spends one's time getting lost and "returning unto one's rest." Yes, I do think Communion, or indeed any beautiful service that goes on *outside oneself*, is a great help—brings reinforcements to one's mind, which is so easily swept away into one far country or another. But other things do it too—the sound of a river, when I was trying to pray last night, brought wonderful peace, and seemed almost like an answer. "His voice was as the sound of many waters"—what poetry. (I think His voice too was like the wind in a cornfield.) Do you know a little poem of Joseph Plunkett's in the *Mystical Book of English Verse*? It's very beautiful. I can't remember how it goes, but it's something about—I find His Cross in every

tree. This place is full of streams, but I've been about very little yet, as the weather has been bad and I'm weak and groggy on my legs still, and have to busy myself in books, etc., as I am still too stupid to write much. I have been working at the " Electra " and am having great joy and interest out of it. It is marvellous the pre-occupation with the idea of whether one ought to take vengeance or forgive, and all the people give their views, and they think the gods have ordered them to punish, and then one person is bold enough to say " If Apollo has done this, Apollo too is wrong." One feels it is all feeling after the truth of love. Euripides is wonderful on the subject of pity. " Pity never dwells in fools." To suffer in a stranger's pain is the penalty the wise pay for too much wisdom. I think it is wonderful that he saw this; so many people now think pity is an affair of the heart, rather arguing a weak head, instead of being the most intellectual of the virtues. I wonder what you are doing and how you are. I do hope you will be able to paint without being overdone. Do you know Euripides' *Helen*? It's very revealing of the worth of the things we struggle for. I enclose two little poems. E. is wonderfully well after the time she has had.

HAMPSTEAD,
November 1925.

EVER so many thanks both for your letter and the delicious chestnut stuff. If there's a thing I'm really greedy over, it's chestnuts! I was very much interested in the paper you sent me. I can't resist sending you a poem I just wrote, it struck me the idea is rather like the idea in your paper. I fear I have rather *stretched* the Church meaning of All Souls!

I feel more and more about the oneness one gets in prayer, if one prays in with everyone one knows. I try to jumble myself up with an enormous multitude, all wanting the same things—Life and Truth and Love—and a wonderful new peace and understanding seems to come, and a bigger life somehow. . . . It's also a way of getting rid of the consciousness of other people's failings, as I find I suffer from them all, and millions of people seem to have the same difficulties and sufferings. . . . It seems to solve the difficulty of praying for health and material things, if one is *sharing* all the time, and wanting other people to get into right relations as much as oneself. . . .

All the happiest moments of life, and the most healing, are when one discovers some new meaning or word of Christ's one did not realize before. I have got a new saying that delights me.

"The Lord says in a mystery—Unless you make the right as the left, and the left as the right, and the top as the bottom, and the front as the back, you shall not know the Kingdom of God." This is in three different places. Acts of Peter, Linus Martyrium, and a Koptic MS. It is wonderfully suggestive, I think. One has to turn one's mind upside down, and change all the values, before one can understand *real* things at all.

I have been reading a lot of novels, more or less silly, and re-reading a book I always love much—Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*. In spite of differences of thought, I always feel I understand and feel that book more than most. I've also been re-reading L. Housman's *Echo de Paris* about Oscar Wilde—strange how Housman could not feel the depths in him. But there are two beautiful stories of Oscar Wilde's in it.

What do you think about pain? It seems to me, in

some strange way, a wonderful soul-cleansing sort of process, a sort of active exercise of one's inner self (I had very violent pain). It's dreadful of course, but frightfully interesting, and of course one knows everything is to help one to Eternal Life, or Heaven if you like it better.

HAMPSTEAD,
20th June 1925.

So glad to get your letter. I do hope you are better. I'm afraid it's a long weary business. I am simply wonderful now that dreadful pain has gone, and am feeling *intensely* happy and luxurious. Everything in life seems so happy and beautiful and right. I can't express the feeling of peace and joy and utter satisfaction, and the overwhelming love and beauty and peace of God that has been given to a Wretched Pig like me! I wish you were here and we could talk about the wonderful experiences and joys and understandings that make one even thankful for the miseries of pain and weakness. But you know it all, and will understand my incoherent letter. I did want you to share my joy—you can imagine what E—— and R—— have been like and what marvellous kindness and care. He sat up night after night, and did simply marvellous things to ease pain, etc. You can imagine what E—— was like. I'm afraid I've worn everybody out. The Doctor still won't let me move in bed till inflammation goes, and that makes me such a trouble. Fancy you ill in Manchester and me here, what a pity we can't talk to one another on wireless or something.

Ever so much love and thanks for your letter. Yours,

EVA.

Think of me not in heaven (!) but in real bliss.

HAMPSTEAD,
October 1925.

WE are just back from Switzerland, and I am wondering how you are, and how the world is going with you. I was ill most of the time abroad, but have suddenly got better and am rejoicing in returning life and energy. Esther is wonderfully well, except that she has just distinguished herself by falling down outside R. M.'s front door and hurting her knee (this is in no way symbolic of her attitude to the ex-premier!). However, R. has massaged and bandaged, and we hope it will be right in a day or two.

Have you been reading anything interesting? I fear I've been reading a lot of novels, lying on a balcony all day, surrounded by grey-green tits, so tame that they took the butter off my plate under my nose, and walked over me. They really were delightful. It was very delightful finding Katharine at Gunten, and we had tremendous talks. They have a wonderful hotel there run by the kindest people. Do you know a story of Conrad's called *The Secret Sharer*, one of the most beautiful stories in the world I think? We read a lot of Conrad. I'm trying to write a paper for the Hampstead Theosophists, trying to show how near Christ's teaching is, and yet it transcends ordinary ideas of re-incarnation — and His marvellous promises of Eternal Life, and what they would call freedom from birth and death. Do pray for me, that stupidity of expression or falseness may not prevent my being able to drop a tiny seed here and there.

To T. P. CONWIL-EVANS

SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE, 1920.

On the bank of a mountain stream!

DEAR T. P. E.,—Many thanks for your letter. Much interested in all your plans and am wondering how things are working out. I am sitting on a stone on the bank of a heavenly stream. I thought to have sat on a stone in the middle of a stream to write, the water is so cool and lovely, but I had to retreat under the shelter of a pine to keep off the sun! This climate is heavenly. Fancy, I get up every morning and go out to breakfast at 8! Don't say how disgusting. I assure you it's quite different here! How beastly London must be. I do wish you could have come out here, so do we all. It's dreadful to think of you chasing Armenians in sweltering London. Anyhow, I hope you are out of Fleet Street for the present. Do you remember the heat waves last August? Here, you wouldn't like the grasshoppers. They are lovely, as big as frogs, and bright green, and they fly. They sometimes come home with you.

R—— and C—— turned up—C—— exhausted after many labours. R—— has got a tame waterfall to do gymnastics on! B—— promenades the hills sketching, C—— sleeps in convenient meadows. I squat beside streams and write nonsense, and E—— somehow makes the world go round in a general sort of way, and I grieve to say has asthma.

The most wonderful music in the world is the sound of running water. Do you know George Meredith's "Water, first of Singers"?

I wonder how your sister will like Italy? Will she go to Milan? It is the most modern town in Italy, but I should think also the most musical.

Everybody is beginning to paint and sketch like mad.

It's very funny to see so many different views of the same natural object. Do write to say how your fortunes are turning out, and if "melancholy still marks you for its own," or is it Melodrama, a much more cheerful person?

BORDIGHERA, 1921.

MY DEAR T. P.,—Many thanks for your very entertaining letter, which was delightful all through, from its Château beginning, through the Dumas-like variety of its incidents and intrigues, the brilliance of its political acumen, and the fine though somewhat cynical flavour of its wit. Are you and your father really coming in February? That will be splendid. We will have a lovely time, as you say—sunshine—long chairs you can lie down in (which you will prefer to Roses!), a beautiful view in the distance, of the sea, and all the comforts of an effete civilization as a background to a continuous stream of enlivening conversation. Be sure you let us know directly you've settled, so that we may get rooms, because the great thing is to ask for them in good time before, or you mayn't get them. Yesterday we had a motor and went very luxuriously up the Roya Valley, into a glorious mountain place, with snow-peaked Alps and gorgeous clear green torrents. We had a wonderful day. I fear C—— can't be got to stay. They have all gone out to paint olives, etc., at sunset. Even I have been sitting out this afternoon.

Con is very gay as usual, but I wish I knew where she is going to be (*i.e.* in what prison?).

We went through six douanes yesterday, on the way to and fro between Italy on both sides and France in the middle. If the meek ruled the earth instead of the militants

life would be much simpler, and people wouldn't waste nearly as much time as they do now, writing, printing, reading, hoarding, copying wholly unnecessary and useless papers! If your people are troubled with championing small nations, they might I think do something for my unfortunate country—anyhow you might come here and talk about it, and lots of other things.

Love and good wishes from all,

EVA G. B.

Excuse a very dull letter. I have been so long time far away from the "dancing din" of London, and all the wonderful things that made your youth seem parochial, that my brain is becoming stagnant with sunshine and laziness.

BORDIGHERA, 1921.

DEAR T. P.,—Of course you needn't have gone back. We both told you so at the time. I just got a prison letter from Constance, all over printed regulations about not using slang and being respectable and keeping up with your respectable friends. Anyway she sent you a long message, which I will give you before I forget. I was to say how glad she was to hear from you, and "tell Mr Evans not only do I remember him for himself, but I remember him for Debussy, to whom he introduced me. How I'd love to hear some more, I've never heard any since."

Great international developments. Most mysterious people turned up yesterday, and very rough-looking men smoking large cigars, and lurking on the balcony, listening to our conversations about Con, etc. They had diplomatic passports, and if they weren't politicians doing themselves proud, they were Black and Tans on a peaceful mission, looking for trouble.

The political feeling here still runs high! The warring nationalities cut one another in the corridors, and we have great *rapprochements* with the General Enemy (and "Little Belgium"[1]). All the stories against "Little Belgium's" owners are fabrications. They are very nice people.

I have just decked up my hat with my own tricolor, so as to be ready to plunge into the mêlée of fighting nationalities!

Love to Clare when you see her. Yours,

EVA G. B.

Please give your father kindest remembrances from us both when you write.

SILS-MARIA, 1924.

DEAR T. P.,—Thank you very much for your very interesting letter. I quite understand how you must have felt the weight of depression. So glad your father is what he calls "in the sunshine again." It seemed so dreadful to be depressed, when he gives so much of vital enthusiasm and real joy to everyone he meets. . . . About being an M.P., I don't know the pros and cons, but if you decided on it you might be able to do wonderful things there, giving relief to everyone on subjects like capital punishment, etc., for you have a wonderful quick direct dynamic way of going at things, and initiative forces. I think a lot of you, and pray that the Truth will shine in your mind so that you will see everything clear. Of course the more Light you give to other people, the more this will happen. You know I think there's only one Light worth giving really, and you do give that to other people, I know, so it must come to you (if you ask for it). How pleasant you

[1] A dog.

are coming back. I am longing to have a talk and hear the alternatives. Yrs. ever,

E. G. B.

Careers and fortunes are such tinsel to get in exchange for one's psyche! One really wants eternal Life more than anything.

SILS-MARIA, 1924.

DEAR T. P. E.,—The light air tends to clear thinking, and we have just had a Brain Wave! Why not, if your many industries and engagements permit, come out at the very beginning of September, and meet us at Lucerne and stay there a fortnight—I mean of course get your father to come too. It's such a very short journey—you start about 3 in the afternoon and arrive about 9.30 next morning—or you can go to Paris one afternoon and leave it the next morning and arrive at Basel, probably Lucerne, the same day; and then your father would not have a night in the train. We should stay at some quiet place on the Lake. What do you think? I wonder what's happening in your world. Haven't heard any news for ages. Our world is bounded by Maloja on one side, and St Moritz the other, but "the Infinite can stand in a little room." Isn't it dreadful to quote your own poems? The flowers are marvellous and make life bright. *The Green Hat* is very clever and splendid Dope for travellers. I wonder what you're doing, and if you have had any more deputations casting down golden crowns and Parliamentary seats before you? and how the agricultural situation is developing. We were much interested in the eloquent article from your able pen in *The New Leader*!

Here the cows eat flowers instead of dry grass, so of course they are better than English ones, and get over

foot-and-mouth disease quite easily. Do write a line if you have time, and tell the news of yourself, and if Lucerne smiles on you.

Love from us both. Yours,

EVA G. B.

SILS-MARIA, 1924.

MY DEAR T. P. E.,—I have just been reading and re-reading your lamentable wail about the wickedness of the world, and the weariness and difficulty of life, and the Daily Roundness of the Daily Round, all of which I too have felt! Your letter is very dramatic, and like the beginning of an autobiographical Russian novel (in fact it's very Russian). I do agree with you about violence, it's everywhere mixed up with everything people do, but you know what I think and *you* know it's true: there's only one real alternative to violence, and that's Christ. Because there is *no passive* alternative to violence, nothing but Love. If one doesn't live definitely for other people, it seems as if one was forced into living against them, and that means there isn't any compromise or intermediate thing. I am always catching my "unconscious" out, trying to get both worlds, but I'm sure it isn't any good, and directly one wants things for oneself, one is faced by ruthlessness and violence. . . . There isn't anything worth having but Love and Mercy—do let us cling to it, and not use it to bring success or any useless glitter! . . .

I can't help thinking you are doing a lot as it is, what can anyone ever do except evangelize a few, very few people? So much more useful than making dull speeches, trying to prove that it will pay a country to do the will of God, which it never, that I ever heard of, does —why should it?

I do hope you'll come out for a bit. It's very cold here, we are going down on Wednesday to Promontogno—quite near but warmer. To-day is Sunday—what a pity we aren't spending it at Frognal, celebrating the Sabbath with music and poetry. Clare is going to Germany and Italy on Wednesday.

Thanks awfully for your enormously vivid and interesting letter. Every sort of heavenly good luck.

Love from us both. Yours,

EVA G. B.

POEMS

COMPLETE EDITION

EARLY POEMS

FROM THE GERMAN

(Lessing)

If, Reader, for these poems you should lack
All sense of gratitude, all words of praise,
At least you might be thankful for the lays
That I kept back.

A LOVE SONG

Like a wave that roams the sea,
So lonely and so free,
Like a cloud that haunts the sky,
So distant and so high,
Like the fragrant summer wind,
So gentle and so kind,
Like a castle in the air,
So joyous and so fair,
Like a lily by the wall,
So golden and so tall,
Gay as any flower that blows,
Splendid as a sun-lit rose,
Bright and bravely blossoming,
Is my Lady of the Spring.
Fair of face, and clear of sight,
Living always in the light,
Valorous and free and strong
As the wind's courageous song,
All of magic sunshine made,
Secret as a forest glade,
Silver-lit beneath dark trees
By pale-starred anemones,
Fair as that white dawn that gleams
Through the ivory gate of dreams,
Glorious to gaze upon,
With strange lights of summers gone,
Silver of bright daisies stored,
Smallest change in summer's hoard,
Gold of vanished daffodils,
Is my Lady of the Hills.

The grace of all things gay,
The joy of a swallow's flight,
The light of a summer's day,
The peace of a moon-lit night,
All the strength, and the hope, and the
gladness of living are hers,
And her voice is the voice of the wind
in a forest of firs.

IN PRAISE OF LIBERTY

Some care for glory, some for peace,
The dying have desire to live;
Sad spirits pray for death's release,
The rest that sleep alone can give;
But peace, or strife, or toil, or rest,
The stir of life, the silent grave—
I know that Liberty is best,
And no man sadder than a slave.

And some would see their wealth increase,
And some would hoard, and some would give,
And each man has his own caprice,
And all delight is fugitive;
A silken robe, a ragged vest,
For prince or beggar, fool or knave—
I know that Liberty is best,
And no man sadder than a slave.

True lovers, when their kisses cease
Cannot forget, will not forgive,
That Love has but a mortal lease,
A little time to strive and live;
They cannot stay the parting guest,
They can but curse the joy they crave.
I know that Liberty is best,
And no man sadder than a slave.

For Love is not life's masterpiece,
And Hope has nothing much to give,
And they who find the golden fleece
Do not so greatly care to live;
Though rich men smile, and saints are blest,
And kings rejoice, and lovers rave,
I know that Liberty is best,
And no man sadder than a slave.

Slave, Love is but a passing jest,
And Life the herald of the grave;
Of these three Liberty is best,
And no man sadder than a slave.

ATTAINMENT

I LEFT the brazen tower on the plain,
And climbed up here through the rain and cold,
But now I'll never believe again
The rainbow's promise of faery gold.
Oh, better the glad earth's golden green
Than the fading rainbow's fickle light,
And better the seen than the unseen,
The sunny day than the starry night.
For there's storm and sorrow and little mirth
On the hill where the rainbow touches the earth.

Green was the hill from the distant plain,
The grass was covered with Mary's gold,
In the brazen tower again and again
The song was sung and the tale was told;
Wonderful songs of the Rainbow Queen
And her treasure hid from mortal sight,
The gold deep buried beneath the green,
And watched by the goblins day and night.
For there's gold and glamour and light and mirth
On the hill where the rainbow touches the earth.

Vain were the words and the warnings vain
Of those phantom faces pale and cold,
Faces of dead men lost or slain
On the bitter quest of the rainbow gold.
How can one fight with a foe unseen?
So near the sky should one want for light?
Where an angel's footstep once has been
A star shines out on the darkest night—
For there's light and hope and the shadow of mirth
On the hill where the rainbow touches the earth.

The sun burns low, on the marshy plain
White fogs hang heavily, dank and cold,
And the brazen tower gleams through the rain,
It gleams and glitters and looks like gold.
Yet here there's nothing but gray and green,
A barren hill on a windy night,
Not a sight or sound of the Faery Queen,
Or the buried gold, or the mystic light:
No gladness, nor glory, nor joy, nor mirth,
On the hill where the rainbow touches the earth.

A WELCOME

I, the ancient King, and guardian of the city,
Crave your justice, noble friend, and trust your pity;
When you ride triumphant down the streets at last,
As you trample under foot the gardens of the past,
Be the grass untrodden where the cypress waves,
Leave some roses blooming on your fathers' sombre graves;
Cast no flaming torch to burn a house that falls,
Let the ivy hang unhindered from the ruins of its walls;
And although you crown your brows, as victors should, with bays,
Leave the laurels in the churchyard, for the dead have naught but praise.

PRAYER OF THE MODERN GREEK

Heroes, from the fields of light,
Will ye watch the unequal fight?
Souls who urged the battle on
To victory at Marathon,
Gods who bent from heaven to see
Earth's valley of Thermopylæ,
Laurel-crowned and throned in state,
Free spirits, ye who fought of late
A fight as glorious as this
By sea-surrounded Salamis;
See the incense of our prayer
Dulls the bright Elysian air,
Whilst echoes of our grief and wrong
Still ring across the fields of song.
Hasten, help us, Strong and True,
Surely we have need of you;
Rest no more by lonely streams,
Where Peace amongst her olives dreams,
Go forth, nor linger as you pass,
To gather poppies in the grass,
But grasp your rusty swords again,
Ye peaceful ones, for peace is slain.
Placid-browed, indifferent-eyed,
Cast your laurel wreaths aside;
Let each man take his victor's crown
And fling it down, oh, fling it down,
Let Liberty's coarse cap of red
Flame out athwart your brows instead,
Ye souls of heroes long since dead.

DISILLUSION

When I was young,
The Sirens were most fair;
Golden harps and golden hair;
In a strange golden tongue
Their songs were sung.

Now I am old,
The Muse is all my care;
She is more fair
Than Sirens manifold,
When one is old.

AN EPITAPH

"Alas that every flower is dead"
These words a smiling angel read
Carven on an ancient stone,
By wild roses overgrown.

REST

All day the city's din
Must hem me in,
And thus sublime
At evening time
Comes my release,
Where daisies, white
In the sun's bright light,
All silver pure
The moon endure,
And Heaven allows the stars caprice,
Under grey olive boughs I seek for peace.

THE PILGRIM

Thus did she follow Art,
Like a starved sparrow,
Picking up every crumb
Dropped on life's muddy road.
Meanwhile an arrow
Sharp pointed from the gods' abode
Did quickly come,
And struck her to the heart.

A CRITIC

His was the voice
That—when the morning stars together sang
In their first rapture of awakened life
And God's own angels held their breath for joy,
Whilst heaven, by that new harmony entranced,
Was wrapped in awful silence—broke the charm,
Serenely speaking in cold accents thus—
" I know not, yet methinks 'twas Jupiter
Went out of tune and spoilt the whole effect."

THE MUSICIAN TO HIS LADY

Behold this life's a glorious thing.
Belovèd, for thy joyous sake,
I'll write such music as shall make
Sad angels sing.

FROM A FAR COUNTRY

I have such longing to be home again,
'Tis lucky that the Muse
Doth still refuse
To visit me on wingèd Pegasus,
For if she came to see me riding thus
I might be tempted with prosaic force
To steal her horse.

Drudgery itself is a sort of goddess.—Symonds.

Goddess of Drudgery, to thee
I dedicate my hopes and all my days,
Knowing that labour brings no earthly praise
Nor heavenly bliss for guerdon,
Only this:
The promise of a higher life, to be—
The lightening of life's burden
Of satiety.

THE REPENTANCE OF EVE

(A PICTURE BY CON GORE-BOOTH)

This is our Mother Eve, who shall not win
  Respite or peace; in vain she makes lament
She ate but half the fruit, sinned half the sin,
  Eternal hunger is her punishment.

She weeps and mourns for that sweet apple's sake
  Whilst high above her in the sacred tree,
Coiled round its withered boughs, the wily snake
  Smiles over her lost opportunity.

JOAN OF ARC

The treasure of age and the hope of youth
  And the hidden light of the dreamer's heart,
A treacherous word in the ear of Truth,
  The breath of fools on the mirror of Art;
Honour and glory and slander and shame,
These are the golden gifts of Fame.

And the soul that fought for a laurel crown
  Shall flaunt it aloft in the victor's car,
But his golden fancies must dwindle down
  Like the flames that kindled a burnt out star;
Indolence, safety, a glorious name,
These are the golden gifts of Fame.

But she whose spirit was strong in the strife
  Has gained the guerdon that was her due—
The torture of death and the height of life,
  The blackness of Hell and the Heaven's blue,
Strength and rapture and sword and flame,
These are the golden gifts of Fame.

A STORM

From the jasmine on the wall
Such thick showers of white stars fall,
That the violet at her feet
Shivers in her safe retreat,
Looking upwards, blue with fright,
Shudders at the dreadful sight,
Folds her leaves and crouches low,
Hiding from such early snow;
Nay, it is not Winter yet,
Only Autumn, Violet.

TRIOLET

("L'AMITIÉ EST L'AMOUR SANS AILES")

If love has lost a wing
  He shall not fly away,
For life has lost a sting
If love has lost a wing,
Though, idly wandering,
  He yet may go astray;
If love has lost a wing
  He shall not fly away.

TO ——

In lines thus narrow
Your mind can harrow
  The fields of thought,
But never the wheat
Shall grow at your feet;
You don't know how
To drive the plough,
  You won't be taught;
You'll find to-morrow,
With heavy sorrow,
  Your harvest naught.

A FABLE

When restless Psyche of the radiant wings
In pity on a drooping lily lit,
She meant to rest a while and gladden it
With light and life and faery flutterings.

This was the sorrow of a summer's morn:
Just then, a laughing child, half mad with play
And sunshine, chased the butterfly away,
And the poor flower was left for aye forlorn.

TO THE PEOPLE ON EARTH

Ye tortured mortals, cease your cries,
Ye are but fools who thus forget
That in the centre of your Bridge of Sighs
There is an oubliette.

A SPIRIT IN PRISON

At midnight on the high sea
A strange voice spoke to me,
Strange eyes gleamed through the blast,
A strange form stood by the mast.
These are the words the phantom spoke:
" I was the Dryad of an ancient oak,
My house was deep in the forest glade,
Strong were the walls, green was the shade.
Oh for the life so bright and good,
The long cool grass, the sun-lit wood,
The dear delight of mother earth,
The gladness of her summer mirth,
Beneath my feet her greenery spread,
And great boughs rustling overhead.

Oh for the sheets of shining blue,
Down by the stream where the hyacinths grew.
Now the Naiads dream alone,
And the laurel's overgrown,
Strangling ivy free to choke
Every unprotected oak;
Nettles growing long and rank
Straggle up the river bank;
Unmourned, neglected utterly,
Sweet flowers shed their leaves and die.
Great Phœbus, I would rather now
Be the poor wretch who drives the plough
From morn till even, toiling thus,
In long straight lines monotonous,
Whose feet have never learnt to stray
From drudgery's most narrow way,
Than wander up and down the earth
Bereft of freedom, void of mirth,
No strife well fought, no battle won,
No sweet rest earned, no labour done,
The ghost of a nymph thus fettered fast
To this ghost of a tree men call a mast,
Tossing always to and fro
Wherever you mortals choose to go,
Thus I live on the wild sea,
Misery, ah misery."

WEARINESS

Amid the glare of light and song
And talk that knows not when to cease,
The sullen voices of the throng,
My weary soul cries out for peace,
Peace and the quietness of death;
The wash of waters deep and cool,
The wind too faint for any breath
To stir oblivion's silent pool,

When all who swim against the stream,
And they that laugh, and they that weep,
Shall change like flowers in a dream
That wither on the brows of sleep.

For silence is the song sublime,
And every voice at last must cease,
And all the world at evening time
Floats downwards through the gates of peace,
Beyond the gloom of shadowy caves
Where water washes on the stones,
And breaks with quiet foamless waves
The night's persistent monotones;
The stars are what the flowers seem,
And where the sea of thought is deep,
The moonlight glitters like a dream,
On weary waters gone to sleep.

PROMISES

SNOWDROPS pushing through the snow
Already bring,
From nature's quiet grave below
The cold and darkness whence they grow,
White thoughts of Spring.

A STUDENT

I AM well learned in all the weary lore
Of all the ancients, and my brain is tired;
Each day I seem to wonder more and more,
Is this great knowledge much to be desired?

But just two things I'd really like to know—
These childish questions haunt me day and night—
" Where do the spirits of dead people go?
And, in the darkness, what becomes of light? "

JANE CLERMONT TO BYRON

Your words are vain.
You wounded me; the pain was fierce,
But now at last
Your power is past,
For, like a wasp, you left your sting
In my sore sorrow festering;
And thus you lost the means to pierce
My heart again.

PREOCCUPATION

Thus did our swift boat past the islands glide,
The pleasant islands of Delight and Youth,
Where dwell the Sirens; as it sped along
He did not even hear their fatal song,
For Orpheus was standing by his side,
Making sweet music of an unknown truth.

ASPIRATIONS

Eels in the mud of the garden pond,
Do you ever think of a life beyond,
Do you ever see that the sky is blue,
And wish that the moon was nearer you?
Do you ever sigh when the skylark sings,
And dream of wings?

AN AUTHOR

He wrote all day, he could not think,
His very blood was turned to ink,
He burned with endless patient toil
Whole gallons full of midnight oil—
A sort of Paper Chase sublime
He ran with Time.

Methinks he strewed the scent too thick,
Time caught him, he grew old and sick;
He ran too fast, he lost his breath
And fell an easy prey to death.

AN OLD STORY

A MAIDEN loved Diogenes,
Well she thought the sage to please,
But he did not understand her,
Treated her like Alexander;
To all her blandishments replied,
" Gracious Maiden, stand aside,
When your pleasant talk is done
I would see the blessed sun."
After such cross words as these,
Still she loved Diogenes.

TRICOLOR

IN liberty of thought,
Equality of life,
The generations sought
A rest from hate and strife.

Hard work on common ground,
Strong arms and spirits free,
In these at last they found
Fraternity.

A DISCOVERY

HOPE and Life came to the well
Where dwelt the toad Despair,
They said, " It's deep, and who can tell
If truth lies buried there."
They stirred the bottom with a stick,
They sought for Truth's abode,
And only found the mud was thick,
And in it lived a Toad.

DIE RHEINBAHN

Als sie beendet war,
Ein junger Fischer sah,
Im hellen Mondenschein,
Von ihrem Fels, mit wild Geschrei,
Das schönste Mädchen Lorelei
Sich toll hinunter stürzen in den Rhein.

A POLITICIAN

" Oh, Sisyphus, a weary life is yours
Of endless toil and unrewarded pain."
" Not so, my friend," said he;
" I toil to push my stone uphill, of course,
But then I rest, and there's a sight to see:
Each time, with right good will,
The stone turns slowly on the hill,
Although I rolled it up with all my force,
The little impish schoolboy in my brain
Chuckles to watch it rattling down again."

DEAD LEAVES

Is this what it means to die—
Free and fair, powers of the air,
On the wings of the wind to fly—
Bold and bright, in sheets of light
Out of the shaken sky;
Over the wold in showers of gold
Stricken of colours manifold,
Shattered and scattered left to lie—
Is this what it means to die?

Is this what it means to die—
Round and round, down to the ground,
Floating and falling helplessly,
Gold in the dust as dead things must,
Wet and sodden, or hard and dry,
Footsteps drowned in a rustling sound,

Sweet to the feet of the passer-by;
To soar like gods for a space, and then
To be trodden underfoot of men,
Prostrate thus in the dust to lie—
Is this what it means to die?

MORNING GLORY

PERFECTLY pure and pale, a thing apart,
Where long rank grass and common hedge flowers grow,
Most like a star cast down from Heaven thou art,
Here, by the dusty wayside, lying low
With one brown earth stain at thy radiant heart.

A NIGHTMARE

I WROTE eight verses late last night,
And slept, and lo! a wondrous sight,
There came eight funerals instead
Marching slowly past my bed.
As they went each nodding plume
Swayed and rhymed across the gloom.
In the twinkling of an eye,
The whole procession passed me by,
And every verse—became a hearse
To carry murdered poetry.

TO A POET

No voices speak to thee—
No visions shalt thou see—
The very sunset thou shalt know
But in its fading afterglow.
In thy mind's secret place
Is neither light, nor song, nor grace—

Foolish echoes, void of sound,
Wander o'er the stony ground.
In such an arid desert set,
Music doth her truth forget;
And in her highest rapture croons
But snatches of remembered tunes.
Think'st thou that life shall cast divine
Pearls before such feet as thine?
Strive as well thou mayest strive—
Thou art only half alive.
Ah, God, the sounds unheard,
The whispered word,
The songs unsung
By mortal tongue,
The shaft of light
Straight from the low sun's golden bow,
No power shall throw
Across thy spirit's night,
Nor any life, nor beauty, shalt thou know,
But endless echoes, and an afterglow.

A SONG

I SING the song of the river,
That mirrors the shallow stars,
While misty moonbeams shiver
Behind their cloudy bars;
The stars, in mystic dances,
Flicker and flash and gleam,
To woo with their burning glances
The icy-hearted stream.

A voice of siren gladness
Floats clear across the sky,
And kindles into madness
The river's melody.

For heaven's fairest daughters
  Are singing like love-sick maids,
To waken the sleepy waters
  With starry serenades.

These cunning, clear-voiced Pleiads
  Shine out so near, they seem
To lie like white-armed Naiads
  On the breast of the loving stream;
The song of the starry seven
  Floats down in waves of light
Across the vaults of heaven
  And through the shades of night.

I sing the song of the showers
  That fall on the river's breast,
Forsaking their cloudy towers
  Away in the gleaming west;
They whisper the secret story
  How fair, on far-off heights,
The stars, in lonely glory,
  Burn cold, deceitful lights.

The river laughs in their faces,
  Despising their fickle play,
Now he knows their airy graces
  Are thousands of miles away;
And they will not leave the beauty
  And light of heaven above,
For a doubtful earthly duty,
  And a humble earthly love.

I sing the song of the rushes,
  That bend o'er the river and pry
To read its heart as it gushes
  In musical gladness by.
It ripples over the shingle,
  And passes in laughter away,
To where its waters mingle
  With the ocean of yesterday.

"AN IDYLL"

(A PICTURE BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN)

"In the twilight land of gleams,
  Through the dusky waves of corn,
Where the scarlet sunset dreams
  Languid of the morrow morn;
Where the poppies nod and smile,
  Climbing slowly, one by one,
Past the bank, beyond the stile,
  Up to meet the setting sun,
Let us wander on and on,
  As the dreamy poppies do,
Till the silent night is gone,
  And we meet the morning blue.

"If we wander very far,
  We shall find that distant land,
Where the rainbow jewels are
  Buried deep beneath the sand,
Dreamy eyes and gleaming hair,
  Where are gems that flash and shine
Like those jewels rich and rare
  On the breast of Proserpine.
For we toil not, must not weep,
  Cannot feel your scorn,
In the arms of love and sleep,
  Dreaming through the corn."

So they wandered through the fields,
  Till they came at last to Life,
Holding up two golden shields
  And her poisoned sword of strife.
And they would have passed her by,
  But she lifted up her head
With a passing weary sigh,
  And reluctantly she said:

" You must toil and you must weep,
Bear my love and scorn,
Far from where the poppies sleep,
Nodding through the corn.

" Take these heavy golden shields,
Wake and gird yourselves to fight,
Leave the dreamy poppy fields
And the dreary shades of night."
But he flung the shield aside,
Down the sword of life she cast,
Dreamily he clasped his bride,
Dreamily they floated past,
Plucked the poppies, rich and red,
Bound them round the brows of Life;
" Come and rest with us," they said,
" Rest from all your barren strife."

So Life followed, poppy crowned,
Steeped in blissful sleep,
And her eyes, grown strange and round,
Quite forgot to weep.
Thus they wander on and on,
As the holy spirits may;
Change is past, and time is gone,
Till they meet the coming day—
For they toil not, cannot weep,
Feel not any scorn,
In the arms of love and sleep,
Dreaming through the corn.

SONG OF THE FAIR EXILE

In this cold country of the seas
The hills are gray, the mist is white;
My very spirit seems to freeze,
I shut my eyes on such a sight.

Then all about me everywhere
  Golden lilies float and dance;
My God, I wish that I were there—
  The sun shines joyously in France.

In Scotland, people never smile,
  'Tis months since I have heard a song;
They tell me I am very vile,
  And everything I do is wrong.
There's nothing left but psalms and prayer,
  The folk don't even care to dance;
My God, I wish that I were there—
  Men live so joyously in France.

'Tis true that here I live in state—
  At home I've many foes, they say,
Yet surely 'twere a noble fate
  To die thus free and young and gay;
Death comes to all, why should I care?
  I think I'll go and take my chance,
And if they murder me out there—
  Well, folk die happily in France.

Gold fetters bind my hands and feet,
  Men bow before me very low,
And soldiers stand behind my seat,
  They follow me where'er I go.
My guards take such unceasing care
  To save me from each evil chance,
I often think in blank despair—
  I'll never get to Heaven, or France.

Yet sometimes, for long hours, I stand
  And gaze and wonder at the sea;
And think of that fair distant land,
  The only Paradise for me.
Among the vines and olives there
  In sunshine all my spirits dance,
My God, the South is very fair,
  Some day, I shall go back to France.

Yon golden lilies, flowers of light,
Still folded in the dark away,
Shall flaunt yet in a nation's sight,
Sun-gilded on that glorious day
When all about us everywhere
The people laugh and sing and dance;
My God, I wish that I were there—
Safe home at last in sunny France.

THE EXILE'S RETURN

You are old and I am young,
Fling high the golden ball,
Bells of joy for all are rung,
The sun shines on us all.
Rain fell heavily last night,
Ah, but now the world is bright.
Let us laugh and sing and dance,
For the sun shines fair in France.
And the rainy night is done,—
Forward, Children of the Sun.

Though the orange blossom's dead
And withered petals fall,
Fling gold oranges instead,
The sun shines on us all.
Here we are at home again,
Past is our long dream of pain;
Let us laugh and sing and dance
Though all flowers are dead in France;
Yet the day of death is done
For the Children of the Sun.

Though you people cannot sing,
Yet catch the golden ball,
There's a skylark on the wing,
The sun shines on us all,

Shines athwart the flitting breeze,
On green vines and olive trees.
Clasp your hands, my friends, and dance,
Golden oranges of France,
  Life and liberty are won
  By the Children of the Sun.

Scotland may be gray with cold,
  Let hail or snowstorms fall,
Here the world is green and gold,
  The sun shines on us all.
Wave the flags and ring the bells,
Out of Scottish dungeon cells
Here we come to sing and dance,
Back to liberty and France.
  Joy and freedom should be one
  To the Children of the Sun.

Though the roses all are dead,
  Fling high the golden ball,
Golden lilies bloom instead,
  The sun shines on us all.
Earth shall echo with the shout
As we shake the banner out;
Round the flag of Freedom dance,
Splendid fleur-de-lys of France.
  Life and liberty are one
  For the Children of the Sun.

CLOUDS

Drooping over Ireland, veiled in sombre gray,
See the sky is weeping all its light away,
Heedless of the magic music of the spheres,
Drooping over Ireland, land of falling tears.

Land of falling tears and broken promises,
Land of idle slaves and famine and distress,
Land of crime and struggle, and of futile strife,
Land of acquiescence, land without a life.

See amid the shadows where dead Ireland lies,
Justice stands, the future flashes from her eyes:
After thy new birth of travail and of pain,
Rise, she says, dead nation, live and hope again.

Nay, not dead but sleeping; surely she shall wake,
In her mighty hands her life and honour take,
Drink the wine of courage, break the bread of life,
Bear the sword of Freedom foremost in the strife.

Soon above those mountains clothed in sombre gray
Joyous winds shall scatter clouds and mists away;
Ireland's sun is shining, strong and free again,
And her fields are all the greener for the rain.

A TRAITOR

You think that I was false for guerdon or for gold.
Nay, friends, I was not bought by such a base reward,
Whose fingers smote and rang out fearlessly, of old,
Steel music, and the clashing rhythms of the sword.
Nay, how could I have cared for any golden chain
Beneath that hateful medal shining on my breast?
My conquered heart beats on in sobs of smothered pain,
I mourn for my lost faith, I cannot sleep nor rest.
They did not try a bribe, they were too wise for that,
They said, " It's only just to hear the other side."
I wish that they had turned and stabbed me where I sat:
No traitor, your true friend I should have lived and died.
And now that I have left you, your young men have dared
Their fickle friend and leader daily to revile—
I am " he whose avarice all his soul ensnared,"
" Who feigned to love, like Judas, hating all the while."
Nay, friends, can you not fancy, did you never find
The foe that slays and spares not all you hold most dear,
Your enemy, your heart's worst traitor, your own mind?
For this is life's last strife, that all men born must fear;

With reason for a sword the mind goes forth to fight,
The Heart's fair citadel is guarded by love's wall,
Strange thoughts fly thick and fast, winged arrows swift as light,
The feelings yield, the fight is o'er, the towers fall,
And death, death, death, to those who flee or yield,
Death to the vanquished, mercy is not there;
Cold lies the dead heart on the battle-field,
Food for that bitter worm men call Despair.
'Tis death, death, death, and this is death indeed.
Lay the slain powers in a soldier's grave—
Now is the martial mind for ever freed;
See o'er the dead her glorious standard wave—
Fair flag of freedom, splendid star of Truth,
I will follow ever where thy beams are shed;
Yea, though they light me to the grave of youth,
And shine athwart pale faces newly dead—
Hope for the morrow, faith in what shall be,
Trust in the spirit's striving that ascends
To hard-earned life, far stronger and more free
Than all your long lost love, my scornful friends.
'Tis life, life, life, the battle on the height—
The wand'rer groping through the pathless wood—
The patient following of a far-off light—
The fight for freedom and for brotherhood.
And if the darkness ever fades away,
And in fair light we friends together stand,
I think that I can promise in that day
You shall not scorn to wring a traitor's hand;
For light, light, light is all we want on earth,
Hearts were not hard if only eyes could see,
We who are blind and selfish from our birth
Are wrapped about with clouds and mystery.
But light, light, light, we pray for all mankind,
A ray of sunshine on the churchyard sod,
Fire in each heart—a torch in every mind,
A star among the shadows veiling God.

AN EPITAPH

O God, I thank Thee that all things must end,
That soon pale life shall strive and cry no more,
That Death tears down the veil Faith cannot rend,
And wide before me stands an open door:
That Thou hast given to pain a potent sword,
And, building all the mansions of the Blest,
Hast still created in Thy mercy, Lord,
Before the House of Death, a Gate of Rest.
And thou, my friend and comrade, hold my hand,
Here on the threshold in the fading light
Watch by my side, together let us stand
And hearken to the voices of the night.
Write thou these words in ashes, nay, embroider them
In gold and purple, a phylactery
Of pious thoughts, sewn round the vesture's hem
Of that pale ghost, fast-fading Memory:
"He was a slave, fast bound to Fortune's wheel,
A saint, who strove in vain to serve the Lord—
A sufferer whom no human art could heal—
A soldier fighting with a broken sword—
He was a sinner, whom may God forgive
In pity on his life-long misery;
By his own heart betrayed he feared to live,
By his own hand destroyed he dared not die."
Oh, listen, ye who stand upon the higher slope,
And strain against the world's low prison bars,
And climb the rugged mountain tops of Hope
Seeking for Joy amongst the barren stars.
Ye, who would probe the secrets of the night—
Fret not yourselves, ye go but whence ye came;
Climb ye by faith who have no clearer light,
Back to the silent land without a name.
Thus be assured that Peace shall come at last
Though Hope be dead, and Faith grow cold and strange,
And all your years of endless life be past—
Bow yourselves to the changeless law of change.

Nay, when the wind's voice in the wilderness
  Prepares the way for winter, scattering
Sweet memories of summer's long caress,
  And all the broken promises of Spring,
Have ye not felt the first faint shudder pass
  Right through the garden; seen the daisies sink
Their blushing faces deeper in the grass,
  Whilst high above them stricken lilies shrink,
Each white-faced martyr bound upon a stake.
  The coward wind may stab them as it will,
They know not how to bend, they cannot break,
  They can but wither slowly and be still.
See where the hollyhocks, a gaudy row,
  Stand up erect against the darkening sky,
Flaunting so bravely lest the wind should know
  The secret of their burnt-up agony;
They too can bear their burden, undismayed,
  The hidden anguish and the secret stain,
It is not only lilies that must fade
  Or chastened martyrs who can suffer pain;
Sinner and saint still languish side by side—
  Virgin and harlot must alike endure—
To what man's life is misery denied?
  Few can be martyrs, Death is always sure.
Think ye that Christ alone in torment died,
  Whilst all the careless world stood round to see?
What of the thieves so justly crucified,
  One at each side of him on Calvary?
Who does not suffer, who shall enter in
  The narrow path that leadeth unto life
Without the knowledge gained through death and sin,
  Unsanctified by grief and bitter strife?
Has not for man's salvation pain sufficed?
  Those who with Him in torture drew their breath,
Stand now for ever face to face with Christ,
  Ennobled thus and glorified by death,

Thus bound together by a common woe,
Scorn of despair and loss, contempt of gain,
The only Christian brotherhood we know
Is Christ's eternal brotherhood of Pain.
All men are equal, yet in this alone
The spirit lives, the body perisheth;
Amid the darkness of the blind unknown
We feel the austere equality of death.
Freedom is fair, yet is no spirit free,
Bound and constrained by every linkèd nerve
Of this great chain of flesh; for liberty
Is but the power to labour and to serve
Unlimited, unfettered, unrestrained
By the heart's weakness and the failing breath;
Only through pain is perfect peace attained,
And life's ideal reached at last by death.
Who are ye, then, that ye should stand alone
Above the grovelling crowd serene and high,
In the calm cloudland of the fair unknown,
Building your golden stair to scale the sky?
Can ye throw back the sunset gates of flame,
And gaze deep down into the Heaven's blue,
And write across the sky God's Holy Name,
So that all men may know that He is true?
Nay, then, come down from these your lonely heights,
Give up the holy joys of solitude,
And stars and storms, and all divine delights;
Now the coarse faces of the multitude
Must be to you as once was nature's face,
For the unfailing good, the changeless law of right,
Do battle in the crowded market place—
I, the dead coward, bid you heroes fight;
And ye who dwell among the valleys, glad
With the earth's gladness and the youth of things,
Care not, though youth shall fail and all the joys ye had
Fly from the rustling of death's mighty wings;

Though love be very fair and deep your life's delight,
  Yet rest is fairer, and the grave as deep;
Hearken unto the voices of the night,
  Shall there be any bliss like this of sleep?

FINGER POSTS

I

This is the way of Heaven: you may kneel
  And beat your breast for hours in futile prayer.
  No faint light flickers on the golden stair,
No hand draws back the curtains that conceal
  That land of shadows men imagine fair,
  And the belovèd shade who wanders there
Invisible, no power shall reveal.
Men talk of all the strength of love and faith;
  Vain words and false, it is an idle boast
  To dream we hold communion with a ghost,
Or bring to earth again a vanished wraith.
No shadow answers to a shadow's call,
This is the way of all things spiritual.

II

This is the way of Nature, as of old,
  When from the primal darkness first there grew
  Flowers, and the sun shone and all the sky was blue,
And life's bright promises were manifold,
Her hidden wealth is now as then untold;
  He who digs deep enough shall find her true,
  Each miner gains at last his honest due
Of her great buried store of gems and gold.
This is the way of Earth: she hears the call
  Of every ploughman's prayer; the labourer,
  If he be worthy, has his will of her.
From the deep furrows where the good seeds fall,
She brings forth hope, and all the life that clings
Round the strong patience of material things.

III

This is the way of Sorrow: wearily
Should one set out with such a weary guide;
The path is narrow and the world is wide,
And no man knoweth any reason why.
And yet 'tis foolishness to strive or cry,
The doom must fall on whom the gods decide,
They walk with pain for ever at their side,
Through her long wilderness of mystery.
Yet though sweet sorrow hath few words to say,
A dull companion on a lonely road;
Yea, though she hath not faith enough to pray;
And on life's shoulders binds a heavy load,
Her heart is true, her footsteps shall not stray.
She leads at last unto the gods' abode.

IV

This is the way of Joy: the artist knows
The secret that makes all things fresh and fair.
She gives a fragrance to the summer air,
And, flashing by where life's dull river flows,
She shakes the languor of its slow repose,
And drives it, scattering music everywhere,
Up to the foot of Heaven's golden stair,
Through the wild tangles of the mystic rose;
There, in the shade beside the river's bed,
She rests awhile, and dabbles in the stream—
Till down the giddy mazes of her dream
She finds the little peaceful hour has fled.
Then forth into the startled sky she springs
With swift wet feet, and shining golden wings.

V

This is the way of life when Joy has fled:
She passes through a wilderness of cloud,
And, wrapped in music for a mimic shroud,
She comes unto the dwellings of the Dead.

No river now, a mournful nymph instead,
By Joy's short sojourn with a soul endowed,
She seeks for her among the nameless crowd
That throng the gateway of the Halls of Dread—
Seeks for the long-lost Joy, the light divine,
The Paradise that she shall never win—
Content at last, and glad to enter in
Despair's abode, and rest with Proserpine,
Sorrow, whose eyes are dark with unshed tears,
And all the ghostly company of fears.

VI

This is the way of Love: a ray of light
In the mid forest through the foliage shines,
And makes green shadows of the serried pines,
Bringing a secret pathway into sight,
Where two may walk alone in their delight,
And half in darkness: for the thick set lines
Of mighty trees their narrow road confines
With the black limits of enshrouding night.
Yet has the forest fortress failed in strength;
Swift windy beams split through the leafy screen,
And pierce the heavy shroud of waving green,
Until the narrow pathway feels at length
The strength of sunshine and the light of rain,
And broadens out into the open plain.

VII

This is the road of Hope, that some men call
The way of Love, far out of human sight,
Amid strange mansions of austere delight,
A way of shadows, pale, æthereal;
High among stars and storms, outsoaring all
The silent glories of each lonely height,
Above the tumult of the windy night,
Beyond the bounds of Heaven's cloudy wall,

Still God's calm splendour shineth overhead,
The great white way where light and gladness are;
This is the Joy of earth transfigurèd,
Set high in heaven, very faint and far;
The glorious Highway of the holy Dead,
The path of Love from star to scattered star.

HYMN

"The wind bloweth where it listeth. . . . So is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

Holy Spirit, force of light,
Soul of beauty out of sight,
Height of light and depth of pain,
Golden sunshine after rain;
Shivering seas and winds that glide,
Shadows on the mountain side,
All things swift and all things strong,
Life and colour, hope and song,
Are Thine, O Lord Divine.
Freedom of the winds that fly
Through waste spaces of the sky,
Freedom of the thoughts that range
On from change to endless change,
Force of life that shall not yield,
Victor on the battle-field,
Lightning winged, and fire shod,
Freedom of the laws of God;
Spirit born of liberty,
If the truth can make us free,
In the power of the whole
Of the world's impatient soul,
Strive with us when we aspire
In the strength of self-restraint,
To the land above desire,
And the life beyond constraint
Of the saint.

SONNET

They who rise satiate from Life's banquet, spread
With mystic providence of food and wine,
Would worship something for an outward sign
That they are grateful, being fully fed.
Thus do they reverence golden calves instead
Of God, and all high thoughts resign,
Mistake abundance for the life Divine,
Fulfilment for the secret of the dead.
They shall not probe the mysteries of pain,
The primal truths, whose feet have never trod
Life's barren wilderness of strife and strain,
Nor learnt among her solitudes that God
Not Satan is the spirit that denies,—
The life and essence of self-sacrifice.

A SOLDIER

"Young knight, go forth and slay
The Dragon while 'tis day,
For soon the sun will set
On your most vain regret,
That no fair deed is done
Ere set of sun."

"Nay, rather would I fight
In darkness," said the knight,
"Than go forth unprepared
Unto my work, ensnared
By reckless vanity,
To do or die.

"My sword not sharp enough,
My armour sorry stuff,
My horse half trained and wild,
Defenceless as a child
And immature,
Defeat were sure."

" Yet doth the snake alway
Such harmless people slay,
And work his wicked will,
The while you linger still,
Jousting and throwing spears
Through youth's best years.

" And all your blows ring hard,
Sham fighting in the yard;
I pray you waste no time,
The battle joy sublime
Is life to men like you.
Bold hearts are few."

The soldier answered not,
But still his blows fell hot
And thick; his way he rent
Through the mad tournament;
Long strove he undismayed
To learn his trade.

But when strong-armed he rode
At last from his abode,
The country people said,
" Behold, the Dragon's dead.
For all your warlike state,
You are too late.

" A knight unknown to fame,
A braver warrior, came
Across the sea to do
The deed God meant for you.
Thus has a stranger's sword
Earned your reward."

He smiled. " Shall I repine
For fame that is not mine,
And grudge with childish greed
Another man his deed?
Mourn at the sight of this
Brave brother's bliss?

" Whilst still beneath the sun
There's work for every one,
And never yet was knight
Who found no foe to fight,
No sword did ever lack
Some skull to hack.

" As long as hearts are wrung,
As long as songs are sung,
Whilst still the Star of Hope
Reigns in Life's horoscope,
The whole world through
There's work to do.

" Then forth strong armed I go
To meet an unknown foe,
An unknown friend to save,
And fill an unknown grave.
Thank God, the world is wide
Through which I ride.

" Forward through field and wood,
To some far goal of good,
Content if by the way
Some evil thing I slay;
Dreaming, when life seems hard,
Of Joyous Gard."

I know not how he fared
Who was so well prepared,
Nor if the tales were true,
Of giants that he slew,
Of deeds of valour done,
And battles won.

Of hardships well endured,
And captives fast immured
He set at liberty—
Such things as these may be—
Right well I know he did his best—
Sweet be his rest.

FEBRUARY AT ADARE

Beneath a mist of dog-wood buried deep,
Here, as I passed along the riverside,
I found the Spring low-laid in blissful sleep,
Entranced she seemed, yet watching open-eyed
The deep brown pools that lie beneath the stream
Like great thoughts hidden in a misty dream,
The shadowy fishes darting to and fro,
And all the wintry sunshine come and go.
She seemed as one about to wake, who lingers
Yet on the blessed borderland of consciousness,
Her hair streamed down between her claspèd fingers,
And fell upon the stream like a caress,
To make a little passing stir and shiver
In the cool surface of the lazy river.
You might have thought her dead, so still she lay,
This sleeping beauty, whom the tyrannous time
Had left to dream the ice-bound hours away
In calm despair or confidence sublime.
The laurel wreathed about her sunken head
Its sickly fragrance through the bower shed;
All round her there had grown a magic ring,
Enchanted snowdrops, whitely blossoming,
Planted by faery hands long time ago,
Perfect alike in beauty and in number,
Bore witness to the pureness of her slumber;
Unstained of sinfulness, undimmed by woe,
Passed by of fear, untouched by joy or sorrow,
Serene she waits life's call and God's divine to-morrow.

A CHOICE

In His Rainbow Garden, God
Made the Spirit of the Spring,
The very sunshine on the sod
Rose to greet her, seemed to sing,

As she openèd her eyes
In the Flower's Paradise.
On the morning of her birth
He gave her leave to pluck a flower
From His Rainbow Garden bower,
To take with her down to earth.
The Spirit chose
No gaudy rose;
She passed where lilies blossomed fair,
Making sweet the fields of air,
Golden sunflowers in vain
Called to her to turn again;
When her scent-compelling feet
Trod violets, she found them sweet,
And passed the fragrant flowers by,
And hurried down the Eastern sky;
Till by Heaven's utmost wall
She met the Dawn, who, as she went,
Scattered blossoms, letting fall
A glory through the firmament.
Down like a faded star she threw,
Laughing softly all the while,
A primrose drenched in light and dew,
The very spirit of her smile.
Then was Spring astonishèd,
She caught the pale delight and fled
To where, on the horizon's verge,
Heaven and earth in dreamland merge,
And the silver April showers
Scatter music through the skies;
There she found no garden flowers,
Nor any bird of Paradise,
But an earthly skylark sang,
And Heaven's weeds were growing wild,
Then through the Rainbow's arch there rang
The laughter of an eager child,
As roaming o'er the Eastern hills,
She gathered common daffodils.

SWEET PEAS

TO MABEL

Sweet peas. The very life of Spring
Stirs each frail wing
To a diviner colour, fair
As the first glimmering
Of moonlight in a spirit's hair.
Sweet with the essence of unfolding flowers,
Fresh with the fragrance of the morning hours,
Bury thy face deep down in dreams of these,
Sweet peas.
Lift up thy heart to the divine delight
Of their frail flight;
Be thy life stirred by subtle airs
Like theirs,
To the faint music of the coloured dream
They seem.
The liquid light that paints the early sky,
Ere in the noonday it grows cold and dry,
Is yours, fair flowers, yours are the sunny ways
Of sweet spring days;
As frozen earth, the while she sleeps below
This cruel sky grown white with thoughts of snow,
Dreaming a dream of colour, seems to see
The glory and the green that soon shall be,
So does my heart, sweet peas,
Though it may freeze,
Long for the sun to warm it through and through,
Dream of the touch of God's own colour blue,
And wandering through Fancies' garden beds,
Where ghosts of blasted rose trees droop their heads
And weep down icicles instead of dew,
Gain gladness from the very thoughts of you.

LAMENT

Oh, the streak of gold in the gray,
And the sun's first ray of light,
And the fresh cold air of the day
On the burning cheek of night,
And the winds that shake as they pass
The glory of piled-up sheaves,
The shadow of wings on the grass,
And the rustle of autumn leaves,
Are as songs that are out of fashion
That no man loves or sings,
Since life in the fire of passion
Has blackened her rainbow wings.

The glory of struggle and strain—
The joy of the world at morn,
The light of the falling rain,
The strength of the growing corn,
A smile that transfigures the Truth,
The sound of a voice that sings,
The glory and gladness of youth,
And the splendour of obvious things,
The songs that were dear to the singer,
Dead and devoid of mirth
Are lost to the gods in heaven
And voices of men upon earth.

For the star of our hope burns faint,
And the light of the world grows dim,
As the halo that crowns a saint,
Or the notes of a vesper hymn;
And thoughts are too bitter for words,
And the silence grows and grows
And there's never a song from the birds,
Nor a scent from the dying rose;
And fear in the soul of a nation
Makes dreadful a noble strife,
Whilst death, with a cold negation,
Has broken the heart of life.

Yet the sun still gladdens the sky,
And the giddy stars endure,
For the end is not yet nigh,
The meaning is still obscure;
Doomed spirits, unwilling to die,
Can murmur still as they pass
Into Silence and Mystery,
"Perhaps," as well as "Alas";
For still the delight of colour
Lies blue on the distant hills,
And the air of spring's all golden
With sunshine and daffodils.

La mort est le baiser de Dieu

PAIN is the price of freedom we must pay,
Wrapped in the pride of our most noble birth,
Cut off from all the brotherhood of earth,
We fret and struggle through our little day,
And senselessly despise the senseless clay,
Yet in the spring time feel but little mirth,
And wonder whether what we gain is worth
The gift of peace, so lightly cast away,
The silence and the strange unconscious life
Of flowers and trees, deep rooted, strongly bound
Beneath the base dominion of the ground,
So near to nature, calm amid the strife
Of forces, life's degrading fight for breath,
And all the noble quietness of death.

SONNET

STRONG spirit, striving upward to the light,
Soul of the world, half smothered in its dust,
Breath of the battle, life's despairing trust
In progress and hope's golden wingèd flight.

Where art thou, spirit? Vainly through the night
We call. Thy sword is eaten up with rust—
We know that thou art strong as thou art just,
Why hast thou wholly vanished from our sight?
The Spirit works in darkness, secretly,
Among the hidden depths and roots of things,
Down in those caverns where no skylark sings,
But germs of power and buried forces lie.
Have patience, when all flags of hope are furled,
Still there is courage in the under world.

THE ABBOT'S EPITAPH

"The summary of a good man's life,
The record of his earthly strife,
A holy message to his heirs
Beseeching for their constant prayers;
A voice of warning and of doom
Out of the silence of the tomb,
So deep anon.
Such things as these I mean to write
Ere I go forth into the night,
With my last breath they shall be said
And carved in marble o'er my head,"
Said Father John.
"That every passer-by may see
That Death is Life's epitome
When I am gone."

The Mass was sung, the prayers were said,
We came about his dying bed,
And prayed the most beloved of men
To tell his mourning children then,
Whilst still he flickered to and fro
'Twixt Life and Death prepared to go,
Yet lingering on,
What those most sacred words might be
Of the long written Elegy,

The Holy Rede that should be read,
Carved in the marble o'er his head,
When he was gone.
He turned his face away from us—
"Miserrimus, miserrimus!"
Said Father John.

SHUT OUT

'Twas hard to bear,
For years to wander thus and wait
Amid pale shadows of half real despair
In the dull road outside the Ivory Gate.
All round my feet the pansies grew
Nodding their wise heads to and fro,
Mocking faces gold and blue
Seemed to whisper "No, No, No,
No thoroughfare."

How strange it seems,
Now round me poppies blossom red,
Low at my feet the river gleams,
Great beech boughs rustle overhead;
Pansies, you mocked me all in vain,
Light flowers who did not understand,
Fade on outside, I live again,
And labour in the magic land
Of light and Dreams.

PETTY LARCENY

Lived a man was wont to steal
Oysters for his daily meal,
He broke them open with a stone,
And ate them on the shore alone.
One day he had not strength enough,
Or else the shell was very tough,

He struggled till he sprained his wrist,
E'en then the knave did not desist,
But forced the oyster open wide
And found a glorious pearl inside.

MONOTONY

Oh, poor, pale days that pass me by
Thus one by one,
With neither tempest nor blue sky,
Nor wind nor sun.
Glad without smiles, and sad without a sigh,
Beloved of none:
Content to fade away and die
At set of sun.
With neither stars nor flowers nigh,
Nor evening breeze nor sunset sky
When day is done.

TRANSMIGRATION—A NIGHTMARE

Down in the darkness of his damp abode
I heard the moaning of the dismal toad:
"I was a princess on a golden chair,
Right joyously I breathed the upper air,
With glory crowned and gladness shod
The polished palace floors I trod;
I smiled to hear my mother say,
'Such shows as these shall pass away.'
Now as I sit where the well is deep,
I weep all day, all night I weep,
For the gladness has gone, and the glory flown,
And here I live in the mud alone."

FROM BACON

Wings for the feet, not shoulders, poets need,
To grace the motion of the flying deed,
Slowly prepared, accomplishèd with speed.

TO MAY

Through the garden of my dreams
Scantily the sunlight gleams,
And the barren grass plot seems
Void of grace.

Yea, a wilderness indeed—
Every flower has run to seed,
Dying slowly; every weed
Grows apace.

In the spring last year there grew
Violets white and violets blue,
But never a dream or a flower for you,
May, the Queen.

Though your small feet, as you walk,
Hardly bend the cowslip's stalk,
Or disturb the daisies' talk
On the green;

And your white hands would not mar
The petals of one yellow star,
Where primroses in clusters are,
In the grass;

Though I know you fear to break
The bluebell's stem, or even shake
Her fragile tower for music's sake,
As you pass,

Yet methinks 'tis passing strange
To hear the sudden catch and change
In the ringings' airy range
Of delight.

Such a chilly sobbing breath
Through the sunshine shivereth;
From the open gates of Death,
And of Night;

Till the music's rapid whim
Groweth very slow and dim,
Dying in a mournful hymn
Solemnly,

And each heavy purple bell
Seems to ring a funeral knell
For the spirit of the dell
Doomed to die:

While without the garden rail
Bright anemones turn pale
As the lilies of the vale,
And the breeze,

Where the sleeping river lies
Underneath the trancèd skies,
In swift gusts of terror flies
Through the trees.

Seemeth it so small a thing
Clouds and darkness thus to fling
In the sunny face of Spring,
Striking down

All the thrills and flights of thirds
Of the music of the birds,
With a weight of weary words
And a frown.

Till the lark in his ascent
Seemeth but to make lament,
That all flowers have lost their scent
On the earth;

And the tulips talk in Dutch,
Of the little human touch
That makes sadness overmuch
For their mirth.

Whilst the wild wood Columbine,
Cannot for her life divine
Why the sun has ceased to shine,
As of old.

Where across the lawn you glide,
Buttercups on every side
Deep among the mosses hide
All their gold.

At the rustle of your gown
The very sunshine seems to frown,
And the daisies shudder down
In the grass.

Shall I thank you much for this
That you spare my clematis,
For you blight it with a kiss,
As you pass.

Ah, the cowslips once were sweet,
Spreading out their golden sheet
In a carpet for your feet,
Soft and bright.

Yet they faded one by one,
Lying withered in the sun
Till the very thrushes shun
Such a sight.

Two tall tulips by the gate
Spent the sunny hours of late
In a stately tête-à-tête,
Growing bold.

Nodding each emphatic head,
Found their petticoats too red,
Wished that they were white instead,
Trimmed with gold.

Now their petals flutter down,
And the scarlet fades to brown,
As a smile turns to a frown
In your eyes.

Oh the dead dreams everywhere;
Wingèd hopes that once were fair,
Flitting through the tremulous air,
Butterflies—

Broken winged and dead they lie,
Where beneath the faded sky
Every flower seems to die,
In the land.

Blossoms wither where you go,
The very brambles will not grow;
The grass looked yellow as from snow
Where you stand,

Leaning lightly, lest you fall,
Like a lily white and tall,
With the carven sun-dial
For a crutch.

Thrilling through his overgrown
And moss-hidden heart of stone,
With the melody unknown
Of your touch.

You, before whose blighting breath
Every flower withereth,
Have cast your shadow as of Death
On the green.

In the spring this year there grew
Nothing but rosemary and rue,
And one white lily flower for you,
May, the Queen.

A WELCOME

FRIEND, you enter to your heritage at length,
You may pluck your laurels from the ruins of our strength;
Desecrate our churches, liberate our slaves,
Gather roses even from the gardens of our graves.
But this thing I charge you, nay, beseech you, gracious lord,
Though you ravage all the city now with fire and the sword,
Though our lives go down in darkness and our children's blood is spilt,
Yet respect the gold we toiled for, and the treasury we built;
You, who know not any worship for things mortal or divine,
Bow your head and enter humbly, this is Mammon's inmost shrine.

A LOST MEMORY

IVORY-GATED, velvet-lined
Is the cupboard in my mind,
Where I put the things I find
On the shelves.
There behind the great white door
Lies my precious, piled-up store—
All the things I knew before
I saw the elves.

Misery, ah misery,
They have made a fool of me,
Stealing thus my golden key
In the night.
When I tried to break the lock,
The house trembled with the shock,
But the door stood like a rock,
Firm and white.

For the elves, they understood,
I might curse them if I would,
It was not the slightest good—
Waste of breath.
When I meet them on the stairs
They laugh at all my fruitless prayers,
For they say my key is theirs
Until Death.

Oh, lock up your dusty shelves,
Lest the little reckless elves,
Seeking what they want themselves,
Should invade
The dark cupboards of your mind.
Hide your keys, or you may find
That they leave no hope behind
On their raid.

SPRING IN MANCHESTER

The ghost of Twilight seems to dog
The feet of golden morning hours,
The sun gleams silver through the fog,
And silver frost lies on the flowers.

Poor battered crocus, feebly fair,
Smutty and stained and crouching down,
Half stifled by the smoky air
And murky coldness of the town.

And snowdrops, dreaming such a dream
Of magic sounds too sweet for sight,
And sunlit fields, and streams that seem
The very smile of Spring's delight.

When, long ere primroses unfold
Their leaves, or birds care much to sing,
Bright crocus flowers with cloth of gold
Weave faery carpets for the spring,

Where all the earth is fresh and clean,
In deep still woods the snowdrops grow,
And spread above the struggling green
Their whiteness like a fall of snow.

First flowers of the Spring to be
You chosen children of the light;
Was it but inborn purity
That made you so divinely white?

Nay, rather powers of sun and breeze,
And fresh sweet air, and scent, and sound,
The sunshine gleaming through the trees,
The gentle forces of the ground.

Else had you not grown lovelier
Than these gray ghosts who mourn their loss,
The great beech boughs that shake and stir
Above green bowers of rain-washed moss.

You flowers who shiver through the gloom,
Round whom the blighting east wind sighs,
Was it your fault, or Nature's doom,
That shut you out from Paradise?

Remorselessly she passed you by,
Poor broken-petalled silver ghosts,
Phantoms of flowers, left to die
So far from all her sunny hosts.

Her gay-clad hosts, whose light and mirth
Brings sunshine to the eyes of Truth,
And crowns the ancient brows of earth
With garlands of eternal youth,

'Twas strange she left you lying there,
With weeds and bits of broken glass,
You that might once have been so fair—
Dead flowers on the blackened grass.

And yet not strange, for all her ways
Are hard and oftentimes unjust,
Yet gently, after many days,
She mingles always dust with dust.

Dust of bright blossoms, manifold
Dust of stained petals, glad to fall,
Mixed with the same devouring mould,
The same stars shine above them all.

Forgotten, yet not all unblest,
Redeemed from strife, and hope, and fear,
Wrapped in that silent dream of rest,
Whence springs the life of every year.

Dead flowers.—To the world is lost
So much of beauty, joy, and light,
Killed by an accidental frost
Embittering a winter's night.

AFTER THE STORM

How the battle raged last night
Through my garden of delight,
And the east wind carried death
In the terror of its breath.
Broken is each lily's cup
The very moss is withered up,
Where life and light were once outpoured,
One sunbeam, like a dead man's sword,
Lies split and shattered on the grass,
Alas, alas.

DEFEATED

One more defeat—and so we've failed again;
We can but yield, heart stricken and forlorn;
Our swords are broken and our heroes slain,
The very flag of freedom stained and torn.

There's none to stand, and not one left to strike,
And evening veils the flight we call retreat;
The sun goes down on friend and foe alike,
Their glorious victory and our defeat.

"It is too dark to fight," a traitor's cry:
The sky's yet red, the sun's not quite gone down.
Cowards, ye still see well enough to fly;
Strike now, if any yet would save the town.

One more defeat, you think it's time to yield;
Nay, we're not conquered, only driven back,
For in the language of the battle-field
One more defeat means but one more attack.

A desperate hope, by desperation led,
Shall triumph in the strong name of despair;
For the great cause, in honour of the dead,
Charge once again, now follow ye who dare.

Oh! comrades, heroes, can you still hang back?
"'Tis madness." Nay, can courage not enlarge
The bounds of reason? Is it that you lack
Courage? No—then sound the trumpet.—Charge.

FROM THE FRENCH (OF VICTOR HUGO)

WHEN the fog hangs heavy and chill as death,
When the moonlight floats where the sunshine stood,
And the evening fills with its shivering breath
The pallid darkness of field and wood—
We will walk through the green land weeping again,
We will lean and rest in the dying light,
Our mortal souls opened out by pain,
On the flowers that are open at night.
Calm night has made such a sombre prayer
From the rumours of earth and the stars above,
Whilst we, of the darkness of life and despair
Have made but love.

THE PHILOSOPHER

(BACON)

You think it strange that I resort
To seek Diogenes at Court?
Nay, for he knows he needs material things,
To give them is the privilege of kings:
Whilst the poor king, indeed,
Knows not his own sore need,
Else he would put his empty glory by
And kneel to court divine philosophy.

TO CERTAIN REFORMERS

As long as idols stand
In the holy place, as of old,
And, instead of light through the land,
Shines the tawdry glitter of gold,
So long as the senses reign,
And the spirit is trodden down,
Your desire ye shall not gain,
Ye shall not win your crown;
For the flesh is very strong,
And the spirit is weak in the strife,
And the weak must suffer wrong,
These are the ways of life:
Yet, take your swords in hand,
And fight for the light to be,
And the spirit's promised land
Of Truth and Liberty.
White-souled women of the past,
Heard ye not the trumpet blast?
Were your spirits less pure then,
Feebler than the souls of men?
Men who told you, you are good,
Holy, be it understood,
And yet neither strong nor wise—
May the spirit purge their eyes

And teach the foolish world at length
That purity is always strength.
Right divine to rule ye feel,
Strong in you the stronger born,—
Then your right divine reveal,
Lest your claims be met with scorn;
For whilst the sky shines clear and blue
Above us, these two things are sure,
Who would be wise must first be true,
Who would be strong must first be pure.
Ye who have not learnt your power,
Whose chained spirits shrink and cower
Slavery stunted, idly tame,
Lift your hearts whilst every nerve
Quickens, in the spirit's name
Boldly claim the right to serve.
Band together, fighters you,
Strength and wisdom shall endure,
Who would be wise must first be true,
Who would be strong must first be pure.
Then put your trust
In the spirit's strife;
The body is dust,
And the spirit life,
And take your swords in hand
To fight for the Light to be,
Ye shall reach your promised land,
And the Truth shall make you free.

FALLEN NATURE

What though thick clouds have quenched the moon,
And all the stars must follow soon,
For blind winds groping in the dark
Swiftly blow out each flaring spark,
Whilst the night grows wild and strange
With the voice of change.

What though the room is warm and bright,
And the fire burns gold on a chilly night—
Let us rise up, my soul, and go,
For outside in the wind and the snow
I see a shadowy form,
I hear a voice in the storm—
Oh, Lucifer, through closèd doors
My heart goes out to yours.
Soul of the Universe,
My soul immerse,
In the deep waters of the rolling years,
And all the rainbow light of falling tears.
Son of the morning, art thou fallen indeed
As the good seed,
The life of spring that's lying now
Cold in the furrows of the plough,
In the first glory of the deep
Unconsciousness of blessed sleep,
The wingèd seed that shall arise
To flaunt against the summer skies—
Till God from His mercy seat
Sees the banner of the wheat,
Her brazen yellow flag unfurled,
Waving out across the world.
Thus, Lucifer, from Earth's cold clay
Be thy Resurrection Day,
Fallen Nature reascend,
With the higher forces blend
This hidden human life of thine,
Thy sacrament of bread and wine.
Yet, soul of sin and life and pain,
When thou dost enter heaven again,
Remember that the earth was sweet
To thy naked human feet,
Remember that the sea shone bright,
Spread out before the gates of light;
When thou dost wave thy spirit's wing,
Think of the earth's good spirit, spring,

And how her meadows were more fair
Than any wind-sown field of air;
Remember how her daffodils
Waved vagrant over all the hills—
Nay, long before thy second birth,
Most humble angel of the earth,
Remember, though thou wert not then
Regenerate or fit for men,
Earth spirit, essence of the sod,
Thou wert yet very near to God.

VISIONS OF SOLITUDE

TO CON

I

Who shall venture to intrude
In the dim secluded wood,
Where the birds have hushed their song,
Fearing to do silence wrong,
And the wind's breath scarcely stirs
In the midst of shadowy firs;
Whilst the sunshine, pale and thin,
Hardly dares to enter in,
Such a sombre gloom profound
Hallows the enchanted ground?
Here old Time might end his life,
Rest from all his toil and strife,
Lay his sickle in the grass,
Smile to watch the hours pass,
And the low winds wander by,
Rustling through eternity.
Hush, the silence grows immense,
Soon a shape shall issue thence;
Some fair Goddess white and tall,
Shadowy-limbed, majestical;
Leaning on her bow and spear,
Cynthia's self might venture here;

Satyrs through the bracken glide,
Or the lonely wood nymph hide,
'Twas in such a place that Pan
Last was seen of mortal man.
Have the gods then in derision
Swept away our powers of vision,
Dreams and poems manifold,
Souls of stories never told,
And those sacred fancies, known
Once to Mother Earth alone?
Have they robbed her thus and fled,
Gone to dwell amongst the Dead,
Bringing these good gifts of hers
To their ancient worshippers?
Shadowy Phantoms, wild and gray,
Sweep along the great white way,
Shattering stars and scattering light
In the tumult of their flight,
Seeking high above the sky
In the Halls of Harmony
Light and peace, where lonely fate
Their desire can satiate;
Where no human voices rude
On their silence can intrude,
But the Rainbow's column spread
Joins the living and the dead,
There they dwell alone, afar,
On some vast mysterious star;
Or could time perchance deface
Even Aphrodite's grace,
Cynthia, growing old and wan,
Cease to charm Endymion?
Or the light grow dim that lies
In Athenè's cold gray eyes?
The twilight of the gods began
First when Psyche flouted Pan,
Leaving him alone to dream
By the bulrush-bordered stream,

Forsaking the strange brotherhood
And secrets of the magic wood,
Foregoing all its ecstasies
And half-discovered mysteries
Of shady light and living shade;
The all inconstant careless maid
From her faithful Lover fled,
" Following the Gleam," she said.
So it is no vision stays
In these dim degenerate days,
To dazzle unaccustomed eyes
With its old world ecstasies.
Who shall wake the music mute
Of Apollo's broken lute?
What strange priestess now can tell
The secrets of his oracle?
Nay, then in this dim and sweet
Shadow of a green retreat
Are the voices of the wood
Clearly known and understood,
Have the rash intruding hours,
Searching out all hidden powers,
Dragged its secret forth to lie
Bare beneath the open sky?
And that song, to Life unknown,
Sung by Mother Earth alone,
Melody no spirit dare
Breathe upon the shrinking air,
Sacred music unconfined,
Born of silence and the wind,
Faintly heard amid the strife
Of Life that crieth out to Life,
Echoed back from sound to sleep,
Deep that answereth to Deep.
Dying with the mutterings
Of those hopeless drowning things,
That strive against the infinite
Dark waters of oblivion's night,

To wake the silence with a cry,
And probe the depths of mystery;
Making a transient flash and gleam
On the dark face of Lethe's stream,
A little shower of foam and light,
Flecking the surface of the night.
Heard by Eros, drowning there
The echoes of unanswered prayer,
Bending o'er the chasm's brink,
Watching life and gladness sink,
Through the skies reflected show,
Down to the dim depths below;
Saved by Love when Hope was gone,
Rescued from oblivion,
Softly sung above the Dead
Sweet with joy remembered,
To Eros self grown doubly dear,
When chanted over Psyche's bier,
The North wind heard it passing by
And caught the ancient melody;
Sang it loud along the black
Silence of his nightly track;
Rang it clear across the sky
In great waves of harmony,
Beating up against the white
Glory of the growing light,
Thundering through Heaven above
Love's triumphant call to Love.
Dying when he fails for breath,
Death that answereth to Death!
Is that mighty music past,
Has the world grown old at last?
Does the soul of man desire
Less Prometheus' stolen fire,
Can Tantalus his great thirst slake?
Have weary hearts then ceased to ache?
Do the Hours no longer throng
Round the chariot of song,

When the first swift quenchèd spark
Shudders out into the dark,
Waiting with awe-stricken eyes
For the golden shaft that flies
Suddenly and free and fair
Through great waves of throbbing air,
Down to where all swathed and hid
By oblivion's coverlid
Earth lies sleeping, in her dreams
The sudden flash of fire gleams,
New-born thoughts and feelings start
Into life in her chill heart,
Every Dream becomes a flower,
Deep rooted, waiting for its hour;
In cold and darkness yet unborn,
Striving upwards to the morn?
How the struggling souls resent
The prisons of their punishment,
Beneath the silence and repose
That every peaceful valley knows,
And wintry calmness of the hills,
Deep buried Life and sorrow thrills,
And earth's great heart must throb and ache
For a smothered snowdrop's sake,
Till by the old accustomed pain
She knows herself alive again.

Are no midnight vespers chanted,
No dark caverns vision haunted?
Does no man worship now Divine
Poppy crownèd Proserpine?
Has the laurel ceased to grow?
Do the nymphs no longer know
How to make its foliage stir
Best to charm the wanderer,
That this forest glade can be
Untenanted of mystery?

Hark, a rustle in the grass,
Heard ye not the wood nymph pass?
Nay, she did not pass, but stayed,
Gazed around her unafraid,
Look upon her ye who dare,
Is she not, then, passing fair?—
Mystery of mysteries—
By yonder tree the goddess lies,
And, although its branches spread
Leafy shelter round her head,
Still the sunbeams shiver through
On her coronet of dew,
And strange robes of radiant green,
Faery maiden, Forest Queen
Of the dim enchanted wood,
Phantom haunted Solitude!

II

Let us sail and sail away
Right across the sunny bay,
Leaving far behind the shore
Where the breakers evermore
Toss themselves and foam and fret,
Vainly striving to forget
What the inconstant sea gulls say,
Flashing on them through the spray,
Far beyond the sun's bright gates,
Where the quiet twilight waits,
And no ripples wave and sigh,
But the cold dead waters lie,
And the white sail flaps and falls
Like great flags at festivals.
Round us such a calm is spread
The sea's strange spirit might be dead,
Dead or drifting in a swoon
Through the silent afternoon,

Down to where the great waves are
Breaking on the sandy bar.
Surely we shall find the vision
Of that sunset land Elysian,
Where the clouds and mountains go
In the dreamy afterglow,—
Hush—the silence grows immense
Till a Presence issues thence;
Folded are her rainbow wings,
Softly to herself she sings,
And her white feet may be seen
Dabbling in the waters green,
Whilst the winds on either hand
Seemed to wait her high command,
Chained and silent to fulfil
The mighty maiden's sovereign will.
High she sits, alone, serene,
Holy Universal Queen,
Snowy limbed and white and nude
Ocean Maiden Solitude.

FINIS

The dogwood's dead, and a mantle red
Over the corpse is flung,
Bow down, oh willow, your silver head,
Summer's silver and winter's red
Glory and gray and green have fled,
All winds are silent, all sorrows said,
And all songs sung.

UNSEEN KINGS

"I am sent forth by Unseen Kings."

CUCULAIN.

UNSEEN KINGS

PERSONS

CUCULAIN.
NIAMH, *a Prophetess.*
EINEEN, *called* THE SORROWFUL.
THE DRUID CATHVAH.
A STRANGER, *one of the daughters of* CAILITIN.
A BARD.
And other men and women, the friends of CUCULAIN.

UNSEEN KINGS

Once, long ago, secluded and alone,
A King dwelt in the mountains near the sky,
And brooding darkness hung about his throne;
His people loved him as a memory.

All day the castle doors were locked and barred,
No man went forth and none might enter in;
Whilst round his throne the great hills kept their guard
Serenely pure, above our dust and din.

He dwelt a wizard on enchanted ground—
No human power could storm or desecrate
The high inviolate walls that folded round
A life beyond the dreams of Love or Hate.

At dark, when doors are barred, and all safe souls
Creep to the chimney nook, whilst the dim light
Burns low and flickers in the glowing coals,
The great King rode abroad into the night.

And peasants brooding by the peat fires' flare
In many a crazy hut, in dreamy mood,
Unmoved by the wild Powers of the Air
And the boughs crashing in the shaken wood—

Fearless amid a storm of thunder peals,
Started and crossed themselves, time out of mind,
To hear the distant sound of chariot wheels,
And horses galloping along the wind.

Thus have I heard in thunder laden hours
Moving amid the stormy heart of things,
The footsteps of the soul's encrownèd powers—
The echoing chariot wheels of Unseen Kings.

Interior of the dūn where CUCULAIN *has been hidden by his friends in their frantic efforts to save him from the evil enchantments of the children of* CAILITIN. CUCULAIN *is resting on a couch at the right. His armour, which has been flung hastily aside, is piled up against the wall. His great sword, 'Cruaidheen,' has fallen to the ground at his feet.* NIAMH *leans over him, chanting monotonously and crooning to herself; she waves her arms to and fro with dreamy and rhythmical gestures.* CATHVAH *and* EINEEN *are sitting on a long couch at the back, holding themselves upright in the rigid and painful attitude of those who have watched long and yet fear to sleep. They are surrounded by a shadowy group of men and women, dimly discerned in the flickering torchlight. Worn out with the long strain, most of these have fallen asleep where they sit. Near them is a table covered with gold and silver vessels. The window is in the wall opposite* CUCULAIN.

NIAMH [1] (*chanting*)

The quiet stars have dazzled his fierce eyes,
About his heart the snow lies cold and still,
Deep in his soul the magic silence lies
That burns away his passions and his will.
Thus do my pale arms, waving to and fro,
Unfold the hidden beauty like a scroll,
The silence of the stars and of the snow,
And the deep silence of the fire-born soul.
Like one who dreams beneath a Druid mound,
In the still dūn Cuculain's [2] rest is deep,
The silence of the stars is woven round
His weary brow, and eyes half closed in sleep.
His mighty sword lies idle on the ground,
With his dull hands the sharp blade intercedes,
The silence of the passionless is wound
About his desperate hands eager for deeds;
The battle fires burn dim, the noisy rout
Of jarring passions in his breast are still;
The silence of great love is wrapped about
His restless heart—his ever striving will.
About his couch strange shadows come and go,
And starlit silence dreams of love and fame. . . .
Yet fairer is the silence of the snow,
And the deep silence of the inmost flame.

[NIAMH'S *voice dies away into the profound stillness.* CUCULAIN *leans back on his couch with half-shut eyes. Suddenly there is a tumult outside, as of many horses galloping across the plain, amid the confused shouting, the rhythmical clash of steel striking against steel, and the occasional dull thud of the falling javelins.* CUCULAIN *half rises and leans forward to listen.*

NIAMH

Nay, 'tis but magic wrested from the stars
And the wind's tumult ringing in our ears.

CUCULAIN

Niamh, I hear the thunder of the cars,
I see the flashing of a thousand spears.
Give me my sword, the battle trumpets pierce
And rend the silence of the sacred vale. . . .
The flash of confused armies and the fierce
Shouts of the struggling hosts of Innisfail. . . .
Dost thou not hear the mad cries storm and ring
Across the plain? This is no time for rest;
Outside the fort great hosts are gathering,
The armies of the fierce Queen of the West.

NIAMH

Nay, it is naught, the dreadful dreamy din
Of ghostly swords, the unreal battle-cry
And magic of the Clan of Cailitin,[3]
Making a battlefield of the blue sky.

[CUCULAIN *rises to his feet and begins to pace up and down impatiently.*

CUCULAIN

Not so, oh Niamh, with thy spells and charms
Thou dost the soldier's sharp-edged wisdom wrong,
Shall not Cuculain know the clash of arms
From the pale tumult of a hireling throng? . . .

NIAMH

Cuculain, thou art skilful with the sword;
A hero in the field, no man denies—
Most strong and crafty at the council board,
Wisest of men where none are very wise.

[*The tumult dies away.*

CUCULAIN

Are they not wise, the heroes whose debate
Is strong in counsel, heavy with great words? . . .

NIAMH

They do not know the stars, nor their own fate,
Nor yet the singing of the smallest birds.

CUCULAIN

Stronger are they than fate, by their decrees
Men live or die, host against host is hurled,
And in their mighty hands they hold the keys
Of raths and forts in the dim underworld.
Yea, even the meanest soldier understands
The runes of life when there are deeds to do. . . .

NIAMH

And strikes his own dreams dead with murderous hands,
Discerning not the semblance from the true. . . .

[*A loud cry is heard from outside. A moment's silence, and then the tumult begins again, softly at first, and then gradually louder. It grows darker.*

CUCULAIN

A wingèd shadow blackens the bright sky. . . .

NIAMH

Ah, there are evil things abroad to-night.

CUCULAIN

I hear the men of Erin's battle-cry—
Farewell—the hour has come for the last fight.
[*A huge crow flies violently against the window.*
What was that dashed itself against the pane?

NIAMH

A carrion bird,[4] most ominous of ill.

CUCULAIN

Nay, but a warning from one newly slain
To fire the soul and rouse the sluggish will.

NIAMH

There was a cry, I heard no spoken word. . . .

CUCULAIN

The war cry of the Heroes of the North.

NIAMH

Cuculain, it was but a frightened bird. . . .

CUCULAIN

Alas, the very ravens call me forth.

[CUCULAIN *begins to arm himself*—CATHVAH, EINEEN, *a* BARD, *and one of the Druids crowd round him, trying to hold him back.* NIAMH *takes her harp and plays a soft and magical air. The tumult gradually grows less.*

EINEEN

Go not, it was a false and evil sign. . . .

CUCULAIN

Art thou a Druid, then, oh fairest one?

EINEEN

Oh, stay with us and drink the fierce red wine;
Dream not of battle in the peaceful dūn. . . .

CUCULAIN

Surely the feast is for the victor spread.

BARD

Nay, let me sing to thee, oh mighty lord. . . .

CUCULAIN

Songs are the tribute of the noble dead,
Or garlands hung about the conqueror's sword.

CATHVAH

Oh, think of the great peace thou wouldst destroy. . . .

CUCULAIN

In the last battle peace will come to all.

BARD

Here in the silence hast thou not found joy?

CUCULAIN

Great joy is theirs who fight, and fighting fall. . . .

NIAMH

Nay, thou didst swear to rest in mine thy will,
Nor leave the dūn except at my desire.

CUCULAIN

Ah, Niamh, all my soul is with thee still,
Yet these strange sounds have set my heart on fire.
[*The tumult dies away outside.*

NIAMH

Hearest thou, oh mighty one, how the thin cries
Of magic battle fade away and cease?
The earth lies peaceful under peaceful skies,
Now will I sing thee a white song of peace.

See, drowned in glory the fierce sun has set,
Deep in the blue there shines a single star. . . .
Yea, I will sing to thee, thou shalt forget
The pale deeds calling to thee from afar.

[NIAMH *begins to sing. As she sings* CUCULAIN *seems to grow calmer, and at last sinks down exhausted on a couch.*

NIAMH'S SONG

The semblance of the world is woven fair
Of Life's most dear desires and bravest shows,
And all the battles of the world are there,
The pride of hero kings, the hate of foes,
The joy of moonlit waters, and the rare
Light of the lily—scarlet of the rose;
And in and out and everywhere
A pattern of pale loves in tumult goes,
Wrought out with strands and strands of golden hair.

The semblance of the world is woven thin
And wears away to dreams, yea, every one
Of Maeve's great hostings and the endless din
Of struggling armies, battles lost and won
In blood-drenched hours by Conchobar[5] or Finn
Shall be as clouds that float across the sun,
And fade as fade the songs of Amergin,
The mighty deeds by pale Formorians done,
And all the evil dreams of Cailitin.

The semblance of the world is woven strong
And bound about the soul with iron bands,
And painted with strange shapes of right and wrong
And restless deeds by many eager hands.
Yea, all our souls are as a captive throng
Of thoughts in words that no man understands
Save those that labour patiently and long,
Content to live alone in alien lands—
And those who have found freedom in a song.

The semblance of the world is woven fine,
Yet with a sword shall no man pierce the vail;
But in the twilight, where great dreams divine
Are drowned in silence, and desires fail,
As through green waves deep in the opal's shrine
A red light burns, the soul of Innisfail
Gleams through her streams and meadows crystalline,
The muffling web of life grows thin and pale—
Clear on our souls at last her great stars shine.

[*During the last verse a sudden gust of wind shakes the dūn. The door is flung violently open. On the threshold stands a wild-looking woman with dishevelled hair. She beckons to* NIAMH.

STRANGER

Come hither, Niamh, for the time is short.

NIAMH

Who calls me thus out of the dark night?

STRANGER

Ah, Lady Niamh, leave the drowsy fort,
Come forth with me into the clear starlight,
Feel the cool wind, see how the flashing dew
Has woven a starlit crown for thy long hair. . . .

NIAMH

Nay, nay, we are but lonely souls and few,
Compassed about with perils everywhere;
Ere I can trust thee, tell me who thou art.

STRANGER

One who has come from a far foreign land
To take a message—one whose faithful heart
Is knit by love unto the heart of Fand.[6]

Yea, I have journeyed here from the dark sea
That circles all the world with hollow tides,
Where faint immortal fires wander free,
And in her twilight kingdom Fand abides.
Oh, Niamh, I have words for thee alone,
My feet are sore with travel, drenched with dew,
Last night my pillow was a Druid stone,
The bitter wind has chilled me through and through;
I crossed at midnight the deep waves of fear—
Far out beyond the gates of death and birth,
And dreaming not that I should find thee here,
I wandered over all the hills of earth;
Still as I went strange shadows crossed my path
Of birds that never sang in sunlit skies,
White faced Danaans from each haunted rath
Looked out and mocked me with most evil cries.
For where the semblance of the world wears thin
The wind had rent the curtains of the night;
And many evil shapes were peering in,
And gray winds rocked the waves of gray twilight.
Oh, I have greatly dared—and wandered far—
And trusted in strange dreams and faery fires;
For well I know thy star is as my star
And thy desire the soul of my desires.

CUCULAIN

Thou cam'st from the dim land of the great Queen,
Surely thou art with wind and fire shod,
Since Mannanān shook out his cloak of green
And many waters flow where men once trod. . . . .

STRANGER

Nay, is it strange that love should find a way
To conquer the cold magic of sharp seas,
Dividing but the green land from the gray,
And those whose love is as the love of these?

[*She leans against the wall as if exhausted.* NIAMH *brings her a goblet of wine.*

STRANGER

Nay, it is geis to me to drink or eat
Or rest until the great Queen's will is done.

NIAMH

Speak, then, thy message, surely thy tired feet
And faithful heart a long repose have won.

STRANGER

Nay, it is geis to speak by walls confined.
Outside, with all the free stars overhead,
And long wet grasses waving in the wind,
The words of the Queen's message must be said.

NIAMH

I will go forth with thee into the night.

[*She takes the* STRANGER's *hand.*

STRANGER

Dost thou not fear?

NIAMH

Nay, then, why should I fear?
My soul is luminous with a strange light
As of deep waters cool and green and clear
Or sunlight in a green-hung forest glade.
How could I fear and hold thee by the hand?
Shall not all evil things shrink back afraid
From Niamh and the messenger of Fand?

[*They go out together.*

EINEEN

Alas, alas, alas, I am afraid.

CATHVAH

Why dost thou fear, thou chicken-hearted one?

EINEEN

My heart is like a haunted forest glade,
Bereft of green, forgotten of the sun—
Or some dark wintry sea most desolate,
Where waves, like silent wolves, pass ravening by.
The air is heavy with an evil fate
That drowns in darkness all the starlit sky.

CATHVAH

Oh, foolish soul, what art thou trembling for?

EINEEN

I fear each moment of the hours that pass,
I fear the clash of arms, the din of war,
I fear the stars, and the dew laden grass—
Yea, my whole soul is broken down with fear. . . .

BARD

See with strange light her deep eyes flash and burn. . . .

EINEEN

The end of all our joy and pride is near—
Right well I know that she shall not return;
Though Love has wrapped her soul in a bright dress
Of woven dreams, yet shall she surely bear
The burden of pity and of loneliness,
And learn the secret of the world's despair.
Alas, alas, for Niamh, whose sad eyes
Like magic crystals in their depths enshrine
The sorrows and the wisdom of the wise,
And a great love and many dreams divine.
Her hour has come—amid the shadowy throng
Of haunted souls, no beauty shines like hers,
Yet her deep voice is sad as the wind's song
At evening, passing through the midst of firs.

Alas, alas, for her fierce soul and free
Amid the thunder of the battle cars.
Alas, for the pale glory of the sea—
Alas, for the fierce splendours of the stars.
Alas, alas, alas!

[*The tumult grows louder and suddenly ceases. The long howl of a wolf is heard in the distance.* CUCULAIN *stirs uneasily. The door opens and the* STRANGER *comes in. She stands for a moment hesitating on the threshold. She has taken on herself the outward form of* NIAMH. EINEEN *gazes at her intently with a vague presentiment.* CUCULAIN *goes to meet her with outstretched hands.* CATHVAH, *who has been alarmed by* EINEEN'S *words, sinks back on the couch with a sigh of relief and soon falls into a deep and enchanted slumber.*

STRANGER

I thought that some one called me by my name.

CUCULAIN

Ah, thou art pale, dear Niamh, and thy hair
Is rent and streaming like a wind-blown flame—
And yet I never saw thee look more fair.

STRANGER

Nay, it is naught, the wind and the cold dew
Have tossed my hair, and made my forehead pale. . . .

CUCULAIN

Deep in thine eyes thy great soul flashes blue
Like starlight shining through a cloudy vail,
Yea, thou art fairer than all women born,
And I will never leave thy side again.

STRANGER

Nay, say not so, for love is soon outworn.
I would not hold thee captive by a chain
Of foolish promises and idle words. . . .

CUCULAIN

In Tir-nan-ogue, where Angus[7] is the king,
Men say love is enough. . . .

STRANGER

Like the white birds
Of Angus, love is ever on the wing. . . .

CUCULAIN

Yet Angus is the Lord of mighty deeds,
And love the soul of every noble dream.

STRANGER

Nay, love is but the wind that shakes the reeds
Bending and rustling round a shallow stream.

CUCULAIN

Once, long ago, thou wert not thus unkind;
Yea, with dear love thy soul to mine was knit. . . .

STRANGER

Thy soul is a reed shaken in the wind,
And as for love, I have small joy of it.

CUCULAIN

Hast thou forgotten, then, the great hall hung
With woven dreams, and all the sweet words said
In the dim sea-girt country of the young?

STRANGER

I loved a hero once; now he is dead—
His rusty sword lies idle on the ground. . . .

CUCULAIN

Alas, oh Niamh, what strange words are these?

STRANGER

Ah, would that men had heaped his burial mound
In a far country, under alien trees.

CUCULAIN

Mine hour has come, the storm of sorrow drives
My thoughts like dead leaves torn from wintry boughs. . . .

STRANGER

Thus doth the wind of love lay waste the lives
Of heroes. . . .

CUCULAIN

Nay, what but love can rouse
The soul to action, doth not the same wind
Stir all the clear depths of the passive sea
Into a storm of deeds? . . .

STRANGER

Fierce waves and blind,
Tossing most idly, a vain mutiny
Of barren passions, weak as the pale horde
Of thine own thoughts wind-driven through the skies
Like red dead leaves, thoughts that were once a sword
Clear flashing through the storm of battle-cries.

CUCULAIN

Like magic graven on a Druid stone,
Thy words are strange and hard to understand. . . .

STRANGER

Ah, who could love a miserable drone
Living at ease in a sore stricken land?

CUCULAIN

Do thou but free me from my promise, then—

STRANGER

So counselled Fand. . . .

CUCULAIN

And thou, what sayest thou?

STRANGER

Thou wert a hero, first of the world's men,
Now is the garland withered on thy brow,
The fire of Life that flared once in thy heart
Has faded to a thin and shuddering flame,
Thy spirit wanders in a place apart,
The world forgets thee—no man speaks thy name—
Now is thy sharp sword rusted at the edge,
About thy heart the snow lies cold and still,
Alas, the pale winds blowing through the sedge
Bend all the souls of men unto their will. . . .
[*She buries her face in her hands like one in great grief.*
Cuculain, rise and go forth as of old
To battle, dost thou fear to face the foe?

CUCULAIN

Oh, Niamh, I had thought that for the gold
Of the world thou wouldst not thus have bid me go
To certain death, and after this 'tis hard
To trust a woman. . . .

STRANGER

Rather call down shame
On thine own weakness. As for me, I guard
The glory and the honour of thy name
From slander. . . .

CUCULAIN

Niamh, since thou bidst me face
The men of Erin, life is no more dear
To me, nor do I fear death or disgrace.
Surely the end of all my time is near.
Yea, I will go to meet the hosts of Maeve[8]
And all this rising tide of hate that flows
To overwhelm me, wave on bitter wave;—
Fierce with the vengeance of a thousand foes,
Salt with the treacherous tears of one false friend.

EINEEN

Alas, thou goest to failure and defeat.

CUCULAIN

This is the fate of all men at the end,
And the end comes when life is no more sweet.

[*The* STRANGER *goes to the door, opens it, and stands on the threshold pointing out into the night. Sudden lights flash out in the distance and strange cries are heard.* CUCULAIN *moves towards the door.* EINEEN *tries to hold him back.*

EINEEN

For such a cause, wilt thou, then, quench the flame
Of many famous years, and tear the scroll
Of thy great deeds, and cast away thy fame,
And break in twain the sword that was thy soul?

[*She sinks down on a couch by the table and buries her face in her hands—the magic harp of Aedh is heard outside, and the sound of a voice singing.*

SONG

The Hosts of Eire sweep like a long wave
Across the stricken land that knows no rest,
Since Maeve the Yellow-haired, the high Queen Maeve
Led forth her armies out of the far West.

Wrapped in the cloudy mantle of her pride
She towers o'er the throng of warrior lords,
Like the pale moon that rules the struggling tide,
Her white face shines above a storm of swords.

Have ye no heroes who shall save the land,
No hosts to stem the flowing tide of war ?
Where is the Red Branch champion strong to stand
Against the women of the western shore ?

Alas, Cuculain, wilt thou not, then, dare
To face the sword of Fergus [9] and defy
Fleeas the Queen and Maeve of the Bright Hair;
For such a cause wilt thou not dare to die ?
For such a cause . . . not dare to die ? . . .

[*The song dies away in elfish laughter and broken cries. The distant roar of the sea fills the air with sound.*

EINEEN

Cuculain, 'tis but one voice bids thee go.

CUCULAIN

Canst thou not hear, then, all the shadowy cries
That waver like pale torches to and fro
Across the darkness of storm-smitten skies,
The souls of heroes passing in swift flight,
They call in thunder from their brazen cars,
Fire-shod and crowned they flash across the night,
And their lost dreams are flaming in the stars.

STRANGER (*still standing by the open door*)

Here in the dūn the torches smoulder dim,
Outside the starlight lies on Druid stones,
The music of the world is calling him,
The sighing wind, the long waves' monotones. . . .

CUCULAIN

This dying flame that flickers in the gloom
And stirs the waving shadows on the wall
Casts but a dim light in a narrow room,
Outside the fierce stars shine—strange voices call.

EINEEN (*in a broken voice*)

Alas, thou hearest but the voice of hate,
When all our voices call thee with dear cries
From the parched lips of love made desolate
By magic woven of evil dreams and lies.

CUCULAIN

Nay, nay, I am sent forth by unseen kings.
Whither they guide me, I will go, their dreams
Glide through the darkness crowded with great wings,
Fierce on each crownèd brow the starlight gleams;
And sudden spears flash silver into sight
From the dim shadows of the haunted glen,
Whilst hopelessly across the gulf of night
The pale winds call unto the souls of men—
Yea, all the wave-washed caverns of the mind
Ring with the rhythm of the brazen cars,
The souls of heroes crying in the wind. . . .
The dreams of heroes flaming in the stars. . . .

[*The* STRANGER *silently gives* CUCULAIN *his sword and passes out of the dūn; he arms himself hastily and follows her. The white fog begins to flow in at the open door.* EINEEN *takes* NIAMH'S *harp and sings.*

For such a cause did not Deirdre[10] die,
And many faithful lovers of old days,
Who had found treason under the blue sky,
They died of grief, and the songs give them praise. . . .
For such a cause. . . .

For such a cause the passionate child of Maeve,
When the world's sorrow pierced her golden shield,
But yesterday was borne unto her grave,
Dying of pity on the battlefield. . . .
For such a cause. . . .

For such a cause, the treachery of one
Deemed true, the faithful-hearted weep in vain,
A sound of keening fills the heroes' dūn
And mourners weep above the newly slain. . . .
For such a cause. . . .

[NIAMH *drifts into the room on a wave of the white fog. Her figure seems at first sight to be part of the thin and vaporous cloud that surrounds her. The door is shut violently by a gust of enchanted wind and the mist gradually disappears.* NIAMH *seems bewildered, like one dazed with many visions.*

NIAMH

Eineen the sorrowful!

EINEEN

What dost thou here,
Thou false and faithless one?

NIAMH

My heart is sore
For thee, Eineen. Lo, where the waves of fear
Break in white foam on the world's weary shore,

Deep in the magic mirror of the night
Red gleam the waters of the haunted lake—
I have seen sorrow in the sad starlight.
My soul is torn with pity for the sake
Of death that quenches every flaming brand,
And chokes the song on the poor lips of clay,
And wrests the sword out of the hero's hand,
And from the dreamer takes his dream away.
Dark flow the mournful waters, I have seen
The blue Lake of the Sword run red with blood,
And, in the starlight flashing, Cruaidheen
Sink through the darkness of the bitter flood.
The shrouded mourner weeps beside the ford,
And thick clouds gather over Innisfail,
Vain is the lightning of Cuculain's sword
And all his thunder deeds of no avail;
Yea, through my dreams wails a dim battle cry
From unknown armies camped in a far plain,
The stranger's banner flaunts against the sky
Above the graves of warriors long since slain.
Oh, Roseen Dubh, most dear and desolate,
Dark flower drooping o'er a hero's grave,
Storm shaken by the evil winds of Fate
And the long rush and road of Cleena's wave—
Bow down thy splendid head, thou stricken Rose,
For one by one thy bright leaves fall from thee,
And leave thy heart bare to each wind that blows
And all the sorrows of the moaning sea.
Thy dreams are dead, the crimson petals fall,
In vain, oh Mother Eire, shalt thou weep,
Not any battle cry or trumpet call
Shall pierce the shadow of Cuculain's sleep—
My grief is as thy grief, and thy great need
Lies heavy on my soul, thou Mournful One. . . .

EINEEN

Alas, oh Niamh, was not this thy deed?
Didst thou not drive him forth from the safe dūn

With many bitter words? Yea, for thy sake
He scorned the world and cast his life aside.
Alas, for such a cause his heart could break,
Fallen are the coloured towers of his pride.

[NIAMH *gazes at* EINEEN *in amazement.*

NIAMH

Nay, nay, he was sent forth by unseen kings.
Of them I know not, nor of their desires;
Yet is the darkness crowded with great wings,
High on the mountains burn the faery fires.
The semblance of the world is folded round
Thy soul, Eineen; yea, many evil dreams
Have cast gray shadows on the holy ground
Where in thy heart the Druid twilight gleams. . . .
Thine eyes are blinded by a magic spell—
Ah, who shall set the trancèd spirit free?
Who shall deliver the wave-haunted shell
From the loud clamour of the mighty sea?
Dream thou thy dream, the hour of Love and Hate
Is thine—the flashing hour of the sword—
I go to seek among the dreams of Fate
The bitter hour that waits beside the ford. . . .

[NIAMH *goes out.* EINEEN *follows her across the room and stands on the threshold looking after her. The fog flows in at the open door and gradually fills the dūn with heavy fumes.*

EINEEN

Ah, there are dreams and darkness everywhere,
And a white fog that hides the starlit skies,
The mournful waves of Eire fill the air
With a long level monotone of sighs. . . .
Alas . . . alas . . . alas! . . .

FROM EAST TO WEST

Great ships glided into the port,
Surely the ships of the gods laden with dreams;
And men said, " It is well,
They have brought their dreams to us as of old,
And now new tales shall be told."
But the gods stood on the decks aghast—
They saw the earth an iron fort,
The air a silver citadel,
The sky a fortress built of solid gold.
Then Prāni said, " Here is no place for our dreams."
So they flung the great sails over the mast,
And sailed out slowly across the seas
Till they came to a twilight land in the west,
Where old unquiet mysteries
And pale discrownèd spirits dwell,
And the world's will is laid to rest;
Where the wind sings a song with a golden lilt
And the air flows by in silver streams,
There in wide wastes of the world they built
An ivory castle for their dreams.

GRASS OF PARNASSUS

(CALLED BY THE COUNTRY PEOPLE STAR OF BETHLEHEM)

Ye who in old days dared to wander far
Beside the haunted springs of Hippocrene,
And ye Wise Men who followèd your Star,
Look down on our pale land of gray and green,
And see by these white tokens in the grass
Here too the footsteps of the gods have been.
Yea, though the black smoke of the world can mar
The Vision sleeping in its magic glass,
Star smitten still the hearts of wanderers are—
The moon sits thronèd in her silver car—
And in her shadow floating, dimly seen,
The pale dreams smile upon us as they pass.

A HERMIT'S LAMENT FOR MAEVE

Now is the High-Queen vanquished, she has cast her sword aside,
And the stones are gray on Knocknarea,
That build up the cairn of her pride,
And Maeve lies cold in her lonely grave on the haunted mountain side.

Stately of earth-encrusted gold the High-King's dūn is built.
Yet fairer by far is the gold of a star,
Or a song with a golden lilt,
Or the dream-gold of the dead Queen's hair and her dagger's carven hilt.

My sorrow grows and darkens as the bitter years increase,
I could have been brave to fight for Maeve,
Now I pray that all war may cease—
Now do I mourn for a Queen long dead and passed through the gates of Peace.

I fear the folk that pass my door to market or to mass,
Dearer to me are the waves of the sea
Than the faces of those that pass;
Better I love the silver mob of daisies that toss in the grass.

I hate the sight of swords that flash in the noonday sun,
I shrink with fear from the battle-cheer
And the clatter of deeds that are done—
My soul grows gray in the silence like the quiet soul of a nun.

The Hood of Darkness on my brow is folded down and pressed;
I care no more for peace or war,
But I pray for a little rest,
Where the golden soul of silence rises out of the West.

TO MAEVE

Not for thee, oh Maeve, is the song of the wandering harper sung,
For men have put lies on thy lips, and treason, and shrieking fear,
Because thou wert brave, they say thou wert bitter and false of tongue,
They mock at thy weakness now—who once fled from thy flaming spear.

Now thou art cold on the mountains—buried and silent and blind—
Dumb as the hills and the stars, blind as the waves of the sea.
A clatter of treacherous tongues goes railing along the wind
And many an evil word is spoken in hatred of thee.

Was it Fergus whose envious breath first cast o'er thy shining name
A poison of venomous words in the midst of the mourning host,
Till thy glory shone before them a wicked and perilous flame,
And thy beauty seemed but a snare, thy valour an empty boast?

They have buried thy golden deeds under the cairn on the hill,
And no one shall sing of thy hero soul in the days to come;
For the sky is blue with silence, and the stars are very still,
The sea lies dreaming about thee, even the mountains are dumb.

THE HARPER'S SONG OF SEASONS [11]

The wind that blows among the apple-trees
Is as a harp of sorrow in the spring,
Piercing the sunshine of sweet melodies
With the sharp crying of a silver string—
Yet there are white blooms on the apple-trees.

The wind that blows among the apple-trees
Makes musical the brazen summer hours,
And gladdens the loud hosting of the bees
With sweet scents torn from many honeyed flowers,
Where the fruit reddens on the apple-trees.

The wind that blows among the apple-trees
Dies into silence on the wintry air,
And breathes but iron sleep for the world's ease,
When the leaves fall and every bough is bare,
And sunshine fails among the apple-trees.

The wind that blows among the apple-trees
Haunts the cold caverns of my frozen mind
With dreams and sorrows and sweet memories,
What are they but the crying of the wind. . . .
The wind that blows among the apple-trees?

The wind that blows among the apple-trees
Of my desire, breaks through the world's control,
And shakes with many secret melodies
The silver harp-string twisted round my soul . . .
Where the stars shine above the apple-trees.

LAMENT OF THE DAUGHTERS OF IRELAND [12]

"In women, too, dwells the Spirit of Battle."—SOPHOCLES.

Now is the day of the daughters of Eirinn passed and gone,
Forgotten are their great deeds, and their fame has faded away;

Alas, for one glorious hour, one ray of the sun that shone
On the gold cathbarr of Maeve, and the might of her battle array.
As we sit forlorn at the spindle the hours drag slowly on,
Hour after hour for ever and ever, cold and discoloured and gray.

Alas, for the deeds of the dead forgotten and out of mind,
Lavarcam the Wise, and Fand, and the Faery-woman Feithleen;
Alas, for the sword of Fleeas, red flaming along the wind,
And Skiah from the Isle of Mists, the dark and terrible Queen.
Alas, alas, for Bride of the Songs grown feeble and old and blind,
Who weeps in the darkness in vain, for the change that her soul has seen.

We are the daughters of crownèd Queens, the children of the sword,
Our mothers went forth to the battle strong-armed and eager to dare,
Their souls were fierce with freedom, they loved, and they called no man lord,
Freely the winds of Eirinn could tangle their loose-flowing hair.
We who sit by the fireside spinning, gain peace for our soul's reward,
And the sword slips out of the grasp of hands grown white and feeble and fair.

Alas, for the camp, and the great watch-fires, and the battle-song,
And the line of glittering cars that thundered over the plain,
And the grapple hand to hand in the midst of the maddened throng,
The swift delight of the sword, the joy that is fiercer than pain—

Here in the sunny grianan[13] the days are weary and long,
Weary are we of the sunshine and the cry of the wind
and the rain.

THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT

When the world was young and foolish and fair,
And gold was as nothing to golden hair,

Two mortals met in a forest glade,
A King fell in love with a Beggarmaid.

Dried by the wind and drenched with the dew,
Her dress was a wonderful washed-out blue,

Her shadowy face was pallid and thin,
But gold was the frame that it glimmered in.

Her little bare feet were as hard as stone,
But her hands were the hands of a queen on a throne.

Her hair was loose and her garments were torn,
But her heart was gay as a summer morn.

When the sunlight glittered through serried trees
And the bracken rustled about her knees,

In the thick wood far away from the town
She gathered great heaps of the fir-cones brown;

She carried them down to the city square
And sold them for bread to the people there,

Whilst the idle folk in the market-place
Gave alms for the joy of her lovely face.

When the world was young and golden and green
The Beggarmaid loved and became a Queen.

With never a sigh for the forest shades
Nor a tear for its dim-lit colonnades,

She went forth to live amongst men and reign
Thronèd in vanity over the vain;

In flowing garments of velvet and vair,
With a crown of gold on her golden hair,

She sat on an ivory throne all day
Till the world grew weary and old and gray.

She sat on her ivory throne and sighed,
" The palace is narrow, the world is wide."

On golden dishes the feast was spread,
But she longed for a wayside crust of bread;

Her robe was of velvet through and through,
But she sighed for a gown of the washed-out blue.

Her heart was sore when she thought of the King,
" This life that he praised is a bitter thing,

" Alas! " she said, " and I would I were free,
For love is but dust and ashes to me."

She tore off her robe of velvet and vair,
And she took the crown from her golden hair;

Then she put on her gown of washed-out blue,
And she laughed aloud as she used to do.

She went to the King in her rags arrayed,
" Ah, the Queen is dead," said the Beggarmaid.

And away she fled in the night alone,
Her little bare feet were as hard as stone;

Her shadowy face was shrunken and pale,
But her eyes were as bright as a fairy-tale;

Her dress was faded and ravelled and torn,
But her heart was gay as a summer morn.

Through the long soaking grass she hurried down,
She paused when she came to the sleeping town.

" Good people," she said, " sleep on, take your rest,
But you shall not be blest as I am blest.

" Behold, I am free, that was once a Queen,
I will seek my hut in the forest green—

" The walls of the city are narrow and strong,
Bringing great peace to the cowardly throng:

" When the battle raged in the plain outside
And many a patriot fought and died,

" The walls of the city the foe withstood—
Better I love the green walls of the wood;

" The gates of the city are carven fair,
All gateless stands the blue arch of the air;

" The castle ramparts are stately and high,
No fort defends the free dome of the sky;

" The King's hall is guarded by bolt and bar—
Behold, I am free as the wild things are.

" Alas, for all souls bound fast with a chain
To the wheel of fortune—the wheel of pain—

" At the heart of the city the goddess stands
Turning and turning with bloodstained hands.

" My soul grows weary, my senses reel
At the giddy round of the whirling wheel.

" The people rejoice that the wheel flies fast,
But all men are ground in the dust at last.

" The voice of the forest is low and sweet,
I will tread the dead leaves under my feet;

" Where great boughs shiver and sway in the breeze,
The bracken shall rustle about my knees.

" Though I eat my bread with labour and tears,
Sounds of the forest shall ring in my ears.

" Though I grow old and weary and wise,
Sights of the forest shall gladden my eyes.

" I have little delight in human words,
My heart goes out to the song of the birds;

" I care not at all for sceptre or crown—
But I love the smell of the fir-cones brown.

" The world grows old and its sorrows increase,
But the forest's soul is the soul of peace."

Her feet were frozen and drenched with the dew,
And her dress was soaking through and through.

But she laughed aloud in her youth and mirth,
Her eyes were bright with the joy of the earth.

Then away she wandered over the plain—
For the Queen was a Beggarmaid again.

THE WATERS OF LIFE

" Nor deemed I that thy decrees were of such force, that a mortal could over-ride the unwritten and unfailing laws of Heaven. For that life is not of to-day or yesterday but from all time."—*Antigone to the King.*

FORTH from her lofty spirit the wild deed
Rushed like a torrent from the mountain height
Unswerving to its end, a rapture freed
By the swift tumult of its giddy flight
From the long narrow channel down the hill,
Fierce with the stored-up force of streams that rise
In the deep waters of a Rebel Will,
The hidden waters of the Brave and Wise,
That move the earth's heart with strange secret powers
Stirring the idle slumbers of the wheat,
They soak the bitter roots of the wild flowers—
The buried springs that keep the whole world sweet.

THE WISE HERMIT

A HERMIT dwells alone by the lost stream
Of living waters long since sunk and dried,
Where the brown lark once bathed her broken wing,
He mourns the silent voices of the tide.

Once, like night birds drawn by a lighthouse flame,
From jungle cave and lair and secret den,
The fierce-eyed dreamers of the forest came
To seek the stream lost now to gods and men.

The thirsty tiger left her bloodstained cave,
And of the waters of the well drank deep;
Wolves slew no more, among wild deer grown brave
The lion and the lamb lay down to sleep.

Now do all wild things follow their wild prey,
Death out of death and war from war has grown;
And the pale hermit, weeping night and day,
Mourns by the dead stream broken and alone.

Once, long ago, clear water from the well
Gleamed in the hollow of his outstretched hand,
His soul shrank back afraid, the great drops fell,
Lost in devouring waves of the gray sand.

Now here he dwells in a long, patient dream,
For he has fashioned a great golden cup
Ready to plunge into the living stream,
And gather all her flowing sweetness up.

Faithful he waits beside the buried spring
Until the fountain of clear water flows;
Then to the world his golden cup he'll bring,
And we shall know what the wise hermit knows.

A MOMENT'S INSIGHT

Beyond the smoke there burns a veilèd fire,
Behind the horizon sails a ship of dreams,
Yet in the night of deeds and dull desire
The earth that blinds our eyes our Mother seems.

Lo, now the smoke rolls her thick cloud away,
And white sails gleam on the horizon line;
Fierce Pity whispers in the ears of clay,
And broken gods still know themselves divine.

NOTES

1. Niamh was a wise woman who, in the old myths, stood for the Spiritual Beauty. It was at her call that Oisin wandered away to Tir-nan-ogue, the Country of the Young, the mystical Eden of Celtic mythology.

2. Cuculain (pronounced Cuhoolin) was the great hero of the Ultonians, the champion of the famous fellowship of the Red Branch.

3. Cailitin was a wizard who, together with his six sons and six daughters, was employed by Maeve in her wars against the Red Branch.

4. The Morrigān (a war goddess) was wont to take on herself the form of a gray crow.

5. Conchobar, chief of the Red Branch. Finn, leader of the Fenians. Amergin was a Druid poet of the Milesians.

6. Fand, a goddess who once loved Cuculain. She was wife of Mannanān, the sea-god, who ultimately shook out his green cloak of many waters between her and her lover. Geis was the sacred obligation to avoid certain sights or actions, laid on special individuals, and which was as binding as the " taboo " practised among some savage tribes.

7. Angus was primarily the God of Love.

8. Maeve was the great hero-queen of Connaught, who led many military expeditions against the Ultonians.

9. Fergus was a Red Branch warrior who had gone over to Maeve's camp on account of the treacherous assassination of the sons of Usna.

10. Deirdre was the beautiful daughter of an Ultonian harp-player, loved by King Conchobar. Through her fatal love for Naisi, one of the children of Usna, was wrought out the destruction of the Red Branch. For the king's jealousy led him at last to the treacherous murder of the sons of Usna, a deed that caused much bloodshed and the breaking up of the Red Branch fellowship.

11. The Durd-abla (the Wind among the Apple-trees) was the magical harp of the ancient gods of Ireland. It had three strings—the iron string of sleep, the bronze string of laughter, and the silver

string, the sound of which made all men weep. These three strings also evoked the three seasons into which the year was then divided.

12. By a law passed at the Council of Drumceat, 590, the women of Ireland were exempted from military service. Over 100 years later the law had to be renewed as it had become inoperative.—Douglas Hyde, *Literary History of Ireland.*

13. "Grianan" is the old name for the women's apartment in a hero's dūn. Lavarcam was a Druidess famed for her wisdom. She was King Conchobar's chief counsellor and messenger. Feithleen was a prophetess, and Fleeas, Queen of the Granaradians, a warrior-queen who fought beside Maeve in many battles. Skiah (or Scathach) was another warrior-queen, who kept a famous school of arms where Cuculain got his training. Bride (or Brihid), mentioned in some very ancient legends, was the Goddess of Song.

Seven songs from "Unseen Kings" and "The Triumph of Maeve" have been set to music by Max Mayer (*Op.* 16).

THE ONE AND THE MANY

" The Soul, being Wingèd, governs the World."

Porphyry.

FROM sunlit meadows my tired gaze withdrawn
Searches the blue sky, where with twilight shades
And paling lights that vanish in the dawn,
The Wingèd Circle of the White Moon fades.

In all fair things there dwells one lovely form
That moulds the curvèd rainbow's fiery wings,
And guides the whirling cycles of the storm,
And winds the stars' desires in golden rings.

I seek the Ancient Form Divine and dear,
The endless Arc of Light, the Perfect Whole,
In the lost glory of a shadowed sphere,
The broken circle of a Wingless Soul.

Here among sunlit leaves, in lonely hours,
The Vision of the Silence comes and goes,
Touching the heart of pallid primrose flowers,
Troubling the waters of the world's repose.

Thus did one muse for hours in a dim vale,
Till day passed dreaming the horizon line,
And twilight laid the spherèd dewdrops pale
On the long grass and primrose blooms divine.

Many are the colours of the Rainbow reflected in the Dewdrops that shiver on the grass, but there is only One Light, and the Sea is One.

Fragments of rhythms I heard in manifold twilight places:
The cry of a broken wave, a wild breath of the passing storm,
A flutter of deeds and dreams, and a lilt of vanishing faces,
A flash from the wings of the Thought that is somewhere a radiant Form.

THE ONE AND THE MANY

PEACEFUL as evening, white as hawthorn boughs,
Dark as the sea, tumultuous from of old,
Beauty has built her shrine on many brows,
And her dreams are manifold.

White hawthorn boughs make heaven of the blue sky,
White daisies mob the green ways of the ground,
White waves at twilight, breaking sigh on sigh,
Pass beyond sight or sound.

We who have seen the spirit of the spring
Die downward to the lowly life of grass,
Whilst the dark earth holds fast each soaring wing—
Dream that all dreams must pass.

Yet Beauty, robed in silence and white Peace,
Leans from the stars and fills not any grave,
Nor ceases when the daisies fade and cease,
Nor breaks with the broken wave.

Deeper than twilight, whiter than the may,
Lo, she hath built her house of wind and sun,
Her coloured robe may change from day to day,
But the soul of Beauty is One.

IN THE PINEWOODS

HERE the white stars brood high above the austere pines,
And the long pine stems seem to gather up the shadowy stream
Of the earth's beauty, all her flowing curves and rapturous lines,
Folded together and lifted up in a long ecstatic dream.

Here in the silent wood Beauty and Peace join hands at last,
And all the wars of the world have shrivelled and fallen away,
For the winds of an Unknown Will are blowing out of the Vast,
And the soul of the world grows one with the lips that pity and pray.

THE EYES OF THE BLIND

THROUGH the wise books that trouble the world
Ye seek but ye shall not find,
For no scroll that was ever unfurled
Can open the eyes of the blind.

The open-hearted Mystery
Still slumbers among the hills,
And her thoughts are the stars of the sky,
But her dreams are daffodils.

Her moods are the light of running streams
That break into foam and pass,
Where the sunset of her sorrow gleams
The dew lies hoar on the grass.

Her pity softens the twilight wind,
Her hands that are cool with dew,
Shall open at last the eyes of the blind—
And her love is the heaven's blue.

OCTOBER

THE sleepless light of morning drives every cloud away,
Shining on a garden space of blue and sunny hours,
But the dreaming twilight holds the secret of the day,
Forgotten by its sunshine and hidden from its flowers.

The rainbow-coloured robe of spring is delicate and dear,
And bright with the unfolding of many eager wings,
But the wise October is the Dreamer of the Year,
And the Autumn twilight holds the secret of all things.

PEACE

The long and waving line of the blue hills
Makes rhythmical the twilight, no sharp peak
Pierces the kind air with a rough-hewn will
To storm the sky, no soaring mountains seek
To break the melody of the flowing line,
But the hills wander on in a long wave,
And all the while invisible stars shine
Over the sea and the white cairn of Maeve.

THE QUEST

For years I sought the Many in the One,
I thought to find lost waves and broken rays,
The rainbow's faded colours in the sun—
The dawns and twilights of forgotten days.

But now I seek the One in every form,
Scorning no vision that a dewdrop holds,
The gentle Light that shines behind the storm,
The Dream that many a twilight hour enfolds.

The many colours of the world are the joy of the Artist, but the Worship of the One is the Wisdom of Art.

SYMBOLS

I HAVE seen the dreams of the world in a rose that the winds have slain,
And the flower of Life flaming gold in the blue shrine of the Light,
The cry of a mystical harp shudders clear through the cold spring rain,
And the twilight is folded in round a dream of the Infinite.

For a moonray has slipped from my soul to the mirror of my mind,
And lights up the shows of the world, changing its diamonds to dew—
But the words and the deeds of men are as smoke that darkens the wind—
Black smoke from the mills of the world blown across the unfaltering blue.

THE REVOLT AGAINST ART

THE earth bends to her will, the obdurate marble serves
Her dream, flowing about her soul in gracious lines,
Rose white as sunlit waves—a mystery of pale curves
Flung up in palace towers or dreaming over shrines.

One Beauty moulds the fragile clay in many forms,
Till men who build seem but the shadow of strange powers,
And the wild southern sea with all her clouds and storms,
Bends low beneath the yoke of a white host of towers.

So doth the round arch of the blue air Byzantine
Seem but the jewelled slave of her enthroned desire,
Yet far from the unfolding of her loveliest line,
Burn the free spiral flames and cones of wind-blown fire.

I have seen broken vails of twilight folded round
A purer mystery than the rich marble holds,
Where from of old the mountain-throned Beauty frowned
On carven forms divine, and towers inlaid with gold.

The Austere Beauty with proud ætherial brows,
Moulds not the dusty clay, thinks scorn of the hard stone,
But, through her dreams, the shadow of forest boughs
Wave o'er the towers of the world, broken and overthrown.

FROM THE WEST COAST

HERE the Atlantic breakers shake the shore
And wild winds blast the life of grass and trees,
Brave rocks are broken in that endless war,
The very earth seems driven to her knees.

Fearless the sea-pink grows on the bare stone,
Her wan face lifted to the wind and wave,
Even as the Lonely turns to the Alone,
And the brave soul is rooted in the Brave.

"THE GREAT GOD HAS BEEN RELEASED FROM DARKNESS"

(VEDIC HYMN)

THE sun that flames in the East, the Light-giver, Agni, Lord of the House of Gold,
Rose radiant in Heaven and scattered afar the Gray Maidens of the Dawn,
And men turned their eyes to the Light, and worshipped a Majesty burning and old,
Till a fire sprang up in the soul of the wise, and delight, and a new song was born.

But here under heavy boughs that droop over rain-haunted
pools in the West,
Whilst the daughters of Mannanān croon at sunset their
old and shadowy rune,
We, the children of dreams, who wander beside pale
waters where waves are at rest,
Have made a song for the white Life-giver, the Lonely—
the silver-souled Moon.

THE ANCIENT WISDOM

Time in dark underground dungeons brought the pale
seed to birth,
Whilst the slow array of the seasons shed sunshine, and
the centuries watered the sod,
Till the Tree of Knowledge grew silently towering out
of the darkness of earth,
And the sun's face was veiled in a mist of green boughs
like the face of an angry God.
But the broken dream that fell long ago from the far blue
deeps of the twilight skies,
Carved in the likeness of gods forgotten, great-browed
desolate Powers Divine,
Like a star that gleams in the blue abyss, or a moonlit
wave in the soul of the Wise,
In the innermost chancel of dreams shall brood, o'er a
secret and shadowy shrine.

THE CITY

On through the iron day each stone-bound square
The soul of the green grass entombèd hides,
The buried Spirit of the Wise and Fair
Imprisoned in the earth's heart still abides.

Then evening passes cool hands o'er the town,
Making a dream, against the conquering skies,
Of giant Labour-houses that crush down
The buried Spirit of the Fair and Wise.

As prisoners count the ray of sunshine dear
That filters dimly through their prison bars;
So my heart burns to feel the twilight near,
And the far presence of the inviolate stars.

Then does the Spirit of the Wise and Fair
Break from her sepulchre and walk the town,
The iron bonds are loosened everywhere—
No pavement gray can crush the green grass down.

A DREAM

Behind the scenes, before the play,
I watched the spirits dress their parts:
They decked themselves in robes of clay,
With patient skill and finished arts.

One moulds in beauty a white face,
One blurs the outline coarse and rough,
One wraps herself in furs and lace,
And one goes clad in tattered stuff.

One soul has got a golden crown,
Of strutting pride she takes her fill,
Another gambols as a clown
With all her limbs at her own will.

One paints a pale ancestral woe
On high cheek bones and pencilled brow,
One has a world to overthrow,
And one goes forth to drive the plough.

One fills with heavy words and long
The measure of man's patience up,
Whilst one pours out the shining song
Like wine into a golden cup.

One dreams a joyous dream and dear,
And smiles on life with flashing eyes,
One carves on furrowed brows austere
The deep-set wrinkles of the wise.

One wraps herself in raiment fine
And poses as a warrior-lord,
One thinks the human form Divine,
And Life herself her own reward.

Content one gains her heart's desire
In carven beauty clear and trim,
Whilst one seeks for the Sacred Fire
To mould her rugged features dim.

But ever all the spirits said,
" We swathe our limbs in robes of clay
And veil our lightning from the dead,
And hide our secret selves away.

" Behind the brows of king or slave
The selfsame secret lingers still,
The Rich, the Poor, the Base, the Brave
Can but in dreams our dream fulfil."

The prayers of the many have made confusion among the Angels, but the Incarnation of the One is the hope of the World.

INFLUENCE

Ye who would mould men's souls unto your tyrannous will,
And soften the tiger's heart, and make the wild deer brave,
Can ye then lower the crest of one most gentle wave?
Or shift the flowing lines of the dim absolute hill?

The soul stands like a mountain strong against cloud and storm,
On the face of wave-built waters is the spirit shed,
And none are formless save the indifferent lost dead—
For the immortal carven spirit itself is form.

THERE IS NO AGE

There is no age, this darkness and decay
Is by a radiant spirit cast aside,
Young with the ageless youth that yesterday
Bent to the yoke of flesh immortal pride.

What though in time of thunder and black cloud
The Spirit of the Innermost recedes
Into the depths of Being, stormy browed,
Obscured by a long life of dreams and deeds—

There is no age—the swiftly passing hour
That measures out our days of pilgrimage
And breaks the heart of every summer flower,
Shall find again the child's soul in the sage.

There is no age, for youth is the divine;
And the white radiance of the timeless soul
Burns like a silver lamp in that dark shrine
That is the tired pilgrim's ultimate goal.

THE THISTLE

THERE's no shade in the woods, through the moveless fir
branches the sunlight streams down,
Lying thick on the roots and mosses, and delicate fronds
of wild fern,
And the gray hills stand carven about us like the cold
dead walls of a town,
And the pines are as pillars, the mountains like marble
towers at sunset burn,
Yet here on the sunburnt heights of the world the springs
of the cool rivers are,
Up here on the high mountain meadow, lost to the life of
the plain below,
The thistle has bloomed in a great white flower that
dreams on the grass like a star—
For out of sharp darkness and sword blades in silence the
light of the world must grow—
Whilst away on the distant mountain side the torrent
thunders afar,
And the thirsty valley stretches her lips to meet the cold
touch of the snow. . . .

Oh ye men who have built up the marble, and carved
out your hearts in the stone,
Behold, the white flower in the meadow was shaped by
the hands of a God,
By the storms of the world your high towers shall be
blasted and overthrown,
But the white thistle flower is rooted firm in the will of
the life-giving sod.

THE INNER LIGHT

BETWEEN the mountains and the sea
I trod last night on holy ground,
Standing beside the quicken tree,
I saw no sight, I heard no sound.

Between the darkness and the light
Vainly the haunted hour stood still,
Void of all vision came the night,
No magic fire burnt on the hill.

The mystic earth seemed but dull ground
And empty wastes of wood and sea,
Yet deep in my deep heart I found
The druid vision of the Sidhe.[1]

I stand between the night and day
Once more in the dim world of dreams,
And over miles of glimmering gray
Far out at sea the sunset gleams.

Now between silence and a song
Once more the haunted hour stands still,
About my path the pale dreams throng,
And magic fires burn on the hill.

Through the greenlands a strange voice glides,
And lights flash near the quicken tree,
Yet deep in the deep soul abides
The druid vision of the Sidhe.[1]

THE LADDERS OF LIFE

The heart of Life is lifted up with eager pride of birth.
The monkeys, throned among the beasts in almost human shape,
Fling down their scorns on serpent forms left writhing on the earth;
And snakes despise the helpless worm as men despise the ape.

When sunshine and green shades serene the pleasant hours divide,
The radiant lily holds her head high amongst dreams and flowers,
No man may flout the crimson rout of the gay rose's pride,
Who flaunts her royal flag above the garden's gracious powers.

[1] Pronounced Shee.

Oh silver lilies, rainbow lit, are ye the Fairest Fair,
Oh men who knit your brows in wrath are ye the Wisest Wise?
Lo! moonlight gleams in silver dreams about a spirit's hair,
And Wisdom dwells in the clear deeps of great untroubled eyes.

Red rose, there is another rose that mocks your crimson fine,
The rose that is the world's despair and wet with sacred dew,
Though none ascend, all Ladders end in the one Dream Divine,
Ye men who scorn the beasts, perchance calm eyes look down on you.

The gods who dwell beyond our dreams have cast our prayers away,
The angels leaning from their thrones have dealt us scorn for scorn;
The monkey's pride that dares divide our brotherhood of clay
Is hushed before the Life Unseen, Unknown, Undreamed, Unborn.

Yet one fair truth amid the shades the troubled soul discerns,
One ray of light Divine has pierced the world's rain-battered roof,
In every shape of man or ape the sacred fire burns,
And God is buried in our clay though angels hold aloof.

ASPIRATION

Soul of the acorn buried in the sod,
Lord of high trees and sunset-haunted hills,
Planter of primroses and Very God
Of the bright daffodils,

Pity the weakness of the growing grain—
And drench our fields with rain.

Soul of the Light and Spirit of the Sword,
Flash one great thought through hosts of huddled years,
God of great deeds and dream-inspired Lord
Of pity and of tears,
Pity the weary ploughman's barren toil—
Cast sunshine on the soil.

Dream of dim lights and twilight-haunted wind,
Spirit that moves upon the waters' face,
Lighten the wave-washed caverns of the mind
With a pale starry grace:
Pity the midnight hours of Death and Birth,
Bring Hope back to the earth.

The Deeds of the Many have filled the world with tumult and lamentation, but the Dream of the One is the Music of Life.

TIME

The soul would know the rhythm and sound of time
As men know music, cunning to divide
Into dull bars a melody sublime,
Breaking the song's wings, crushing down her pride,

They follow her swift steps among the flowers;
Thus do we break the radiance of the whole
Into this rainbow prism of days and hours,
Splitting the absolute glory of the soul.

Then like a milky way of many stars,
The manifold pale fires are brought to birth,
And men grope blindly against iron bars,
And pain and disappointment walk the earth.

THE TRUCE OF GOD

The wind has fallen at last, and the daylight has faded
away,
Peace lies on the hills and the sea, and peace on the
rain-drenched sod,
And the evening dreams in pity o'er the battlefields of
the day;
But those who shoot pigeons at twilight have broken the
Truce of God.

THE MERCIFUL KNIGHT

BURNE-JONES

In the dim twilight-haunted garden
Pardon has met with pardon,
And the proud flashing giant arms divine
That move the worlds, thus gently folded, rest
Long on the dreamer's breast,
Where Pity leans from that harsh cross of pain
That is the inmost and inviolate shrine
Of Him who is the Slayer and the Slain.

A SPIRIT IN PRISON

Oh pale discrownèd brow and quenchèd eyes,
And thick dull flesh, like heavy clods of clay,
Building a grave where some sad sleeper lies
Half drenched in dreams, half conscious of decay.

This is the mystery of prison bars
That guard the dusty windows of the mind,
Holding a long-lost glory from the stars,
And a free spirit from the roaming wind.

Yet shalt thou see beyond the nerveless brain
In the dark chambers of unknown desire,
A dim face pressed against the window pane—
Behind the quenchèd eyes immortal fire.

THE WEAVER

I was the child that passed long hours away
Chopping red beetroot in the hay-piled barn;
Now must I spend the wind-blown April day
Minding great looms and tying knots in yarn.

Once long ago I tramped through rain and slush
In brown waves breaking up the stubborn soil,
I wove and wove the twilight's purple hush
To fold about the furrowed heart of toil.

Strange fires and frosts burnt out the seasons' dross,
I watched slow Powers the woven cloth reveal,
While God stood counting out His gain and loss,
And Day and Night pushed on the heavy wheel.

Held close against the breast of living Powers
A little pulse, yet near the heart of strife,
I followed the slow plough for hours and hours
Minding through sun and shower the loom of life.

The big winds, harsh and clear and strong and salt,
Blew through my soul and all the world rang true,
In all things born I knew no stain or fault,
My heart was soft to every flower that grew.

The cabbages in my small garden patch
Were rooted in the earth's heart; wings unseen
Throbbed in the silence under the dark thatch,
And brave birds sang long ere the boughs were green.

Once did I labour at the living stuff
That holds the fire, the water and the wind;
Now do I weave the garments coarse and rough
That some vain men have made for vain mankind.

THE DESOLATE ARMY

In the world's wars we have no lot nor part,
No tattered flag, no sound of trampling feet
Thrills the dark caverns of a nation's heart
For us, no battle song makes danger sweet.

In the world's praise and love we have no place,
We have not turned the drunkard from his wine—
Nor toiled to build fine dwellings for the race—
Nor burnt new incense at an ancient shrine.

Yet have we seen a glimpse of radiant forms
Behind the blackness of these smoke-stained hours,
Where wisdom shines beyond all clouds and storms,
And pity dwells amongst the steadfast powers.

Then divine madness fills the heart and brain
Of the pale army passionately proud—
We toil on dimly through much strife and strain
To unveil those radiant brows unto the crowd.

THE LAND TO A LANDLORD

You hug to your soul a handful of dust,
And you think the round world your sacred trust—
But the sun shines, and the wind blows,
And nobody cares and nobody knows.

O the bracken waves and the foxgloves flame,
And none of them ever has heard your name—
Near and dear is the curlew's cry,
You are merely a stranger passing by.

Sheer up through the shadows the mountain towers
And dreams wander free in this world of ours,—
Though you may turn the grass to gold,
The twilight has left you out in the cold.

Though you are king of the rose and the wheat,
Not for you, not for you is the bog-myrtle sweet,
Though you are lord of the long grass,
The hemlock bows not her head as you pass.

The poppies would flutter amongst the corn
Even if you had never been born,
With your will or without your will
The ragweed can wander over the hill.

Down there in the bog where the plovers call
You are but an outcast after all,
Over your head the sky gleams blue—
Not a cloud or a star belongs to you.

TO A FRIEND

Carve thou thy dream in marble, scrawl it clear
On the high walls of Art above the throng,
Shape it in towers that climb from sphere to sphere,
Fold it in music, mould it into song.

But live it not, nor let the wandering wind
Know of the gentle power in silence born,
For in the ways of men the dreamer's mind
Shall be by dogs devoured, by vultures torn.

Alas, dear heart, along the ways of sense
No glory save the light of gold can shine;
Men strive with angry deeds—ah! get thee hence,
Cast not thy star before these hungry swine.

The song would flood your soul in silver streams,
The tower holds on high the builder's trust,
The marble bends unto the sculptor's dreams,
But men tread out your fire in the dust.

FROM THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

I DARE not bend the white rose to my will,
Nor break the lilies' stalk, nor idly part
The climbing sweetbriar from the green-clad hill,
Nor steal the emerald's fire from the earth's heart.

Yea, in the spring my fierce desires refrain
From the pale primroses, my hands are cold
To flaming poppies; through the woods in vain
My path is lit with the laburnum's gold.

No rose shall shed for me her delicate leaves,
No bluebell fade and die an hour too soon,
No poppy mourn the cornfield's golden sheaves,
No radiant lily pine for the hot noon.

Harmless I roam amongst the dreams that bloom
In the lost garden, passing them thus by,
Loath to pluck flowers too fair to deck a tomb,
Too bright to thrive under a cloudy sky.

Yet from the secret ways one dream I bring,
One vision braves the harsh unkindly air,
The blighting human touch, the world's cold spring,
The withering Autumn promise everywhere.

Fallen I found this broken branch of may
That once soared high above the bluebell towers,
Now in my soul it blooms from day to day,
White with the joy of lost immortal hours.

Many are the sorrows of men as the waves of the sea, wandering to and fro with the restless tides, but One is the untroubled Fire that burns on the Hearth of the Universe.

"THE SOUL ATTAINS"

Oh strife too short, oh victory too dear,
Deep in the artist's soul the flame burns cold,
Freed from the goad of dreams, the lash of fear,
He who attains, remembers, and grows old.

Oh youthfulness of failure, the long hours
Of uncrowned labour, unregarded toil,
Are as the wintry seed of the spring flowers,
The starry Hope that blossoms near the soil.

Is there not precious metal to be wrung
From the earth's heart and the streams' secret ways,
The stories not yet told, the songs unsung,
The dreams undreamed—oh, fair beyond all praise,

Like treasure buried underneath a hill,
In some sea-guarded isle, or barren land,
They wait the labour of the hero's will—
The magic touch of the adventurer's hand.

Joy dwells in austere deeds, the perilous climb
That leads tired footsteps to the mountain height,
And music trembles in the halting rhyme
That scales with lagging steps the hill of light.

Still are the world's unseen yet crownèd powers,
The courage and the ecstasy of toil,
And the sweet wind-blown breath of the wild flowers,
The starry Hope that blossoms near the soil.

LIS-AN-DOILL[1]

Once in the year the ancient world grows young,
For me alone there is no dream of spring,
Alas there are many songs to be sung—
New songs and old—I am too old to sing,

[1] "The Fort of the Blind Man."

Songs of the constant world that never grows
Tired of green boughs—impatient of the may—
That waits for the unfolding of the rose,
On fire with hope to-day as yesterday.

I am too old—I pass the daisies by,
And tread the grass down under tired feet,
Time washes all the blue out of the sky—
The very violets are no longer sweet.

Even the constant spring is false to me,
Not all the rosebuds ever yet unfurled,
Nor any dream of roses yet to be,
Can reconcile me to this evil world.

Once in the year the young spring's green and gold
Gleams in the sun and rustles in the wind;
Alas! there is neither light for the old,
Nor any dream of colour for the blind.

THE LITTLE WAVES OF BREFFNY[1]

The grand road from the mountain goes shining to the sea,
And there is traffic in it and many a horse and cart,
But the little roads of Cloonagh are dearer far to me,
And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling through my heart.

A great storm from the ocean goes shouting o'er the hill,
And there is glory in it and terror on the wind,
But the haunted air of twilight is very strange and still,
And the little winds of twilight are dearer to my mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep storming on their way,
Shining green and silver with the hidden herring shoal,
But the Little Waves of Breffny have drenched my heart in spray,
And the Little Waves of Breffny go stumbling through my soul.

[1] This song has been set to music by Max Mayer (*Op.* 17).

MONNA LISA

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Her narrow eyelids radiantly obscure,
Veiling the profound smile of her strange eyes,
Trouble the Well where the world's secret lies
Lost in blue grottos icy cold and pure,
Deep in the buried spirit of the Wise.

LA PENSÉE

RODIN

Hiding in mazes of marble her chin sunk deep in the stone,
She breaks away from the senses five, the warders of the soul,
Alone in the wind-swept deeps of Being she seeks the Alone,
The adventurer's innermost light, the dreamer's perilous goal.

THE LOST STREAM

Down this dry watercourse once long ago
The Living Waters strong and clear and cold,
Fresh from the mountain summit and the snow,
Shining with dreams, into the valley rolled.

Now the green valley mourns, the rock-hewn bed
Of the loud torrent lies sunstruck and still,
The wild flowers droop, the very grass is dead,
And the tired traveller faints on the parched hill.

THE PLACE OF PEACE

THE Fear that lurks in the crowded street
And hides in the market-place,
And follows the stranger with unseen feet
And a half-averted face,
Shall fly from the silence that sanctifies
The lonely wood and the wind's held breath,
From the sorrows of fools, and the dreams of the wise,
And the shadows that darken the gates of death.

CLAIRVOYANTE

"Nothing that is vast enters into the life of mortals without a curse."—ANTIGONE.

LONG ago a spirit was torn from the fire of the opal spheres,
To light the lamp of the world with a spark from the infinite,
Though dull is the lamp and stained with the smoke of the dusty years,
Behind the dark glass burns ever a magic circle of light.

Comrade, your soul goes crowned with an aura of gracious rays,
Burning brighter about your brow as the sunbeams fade and cease—
For passion and pity and love are the moonlight of your days,
But in my soul is a flame of the pitiless astral peace.

Wings that are pale with dreaming or folded in flaming wrath,
Crowd round us rainbow-hued through the shadows of dread and desire;
But in the mirror my soul has the shrivelled wings of a moth,
Blackened and blistered and scorched by the magic circle of fire.

THE TRAVELLERS

(TO E.G.R.)

Was it not strange that by the tideless sea
The jar and hurry of our lives should cease?
That under olive boughs we found our peace,
And all the world's great song in Italy?

Is it not strange though Peace herself has wings
And long ago has gone her separate ways,
On through the tumult of our fretful days
From Life to Death the great song chimes and rings?

In that sad day shall then the singing fail,
Shall Life go down in silence at the end,
And in the darkness friend be lost to friend,
And all our love and dreams of no avail?

You whose Love's melody makes glad the gloom
Of a long labour and a patient strife,
Is not that music greater than our life?
Shall not a little song outlast that doom?

The Winged Horse shall be harnessed to many ploughs, but in the end there is freedom, and the aether vibrates with the rhythm of Unseen Light.

THE PROUD PHILOSOPHER

Plotinus, like a proud and idle boy
Ashamed to study in the lowest class,
Himself the comrade of the sons of joy,
Disdained the secrets of the earthbound grass.

He sought not beauty in the dawn's pale fire,
Nor sorrow in the stream of human tears,
But mourned the broken wings of his desire,
And loved the songs of far ancestral spheres.

He knew whence he had come, there was no bar
Between his spirit, into darkness hurled,
And the blue deeps that mocked him from afar,
Dreaming in sorrow over a lost world—

Shrinking before his mighty comrade's scorn,
He hid from men the country of his birth,
For shame and grief to think he had been born
Far from the spheres of light on this dull earth.

Unmoved he passed through mystic twilight hours,
Flouted the very sunset on the hill,
Brother of shadowy, proud, immortal powers,
Child of the spirit's iridescent will.

He who thus claimed high lineage rent the vail
Between the worlds, and tore away the cloud
That hides the snowclad summit from the dale—
The world is fairer for the Pure and Proud.

THE INCARNATE

Deep in the soul there throbs the secret pain
Of one homesick for dear familiar things,
When Spring winds rock the waves of sunlit rain
And on the grass there falls the shadow of wings.

How should one bend one's dreams to the dark clay
Where carven beauty mixed with madness dwells?
And men who fear to die fear not to slay,
And Life has built herself ten thousand hells.

No wave that breaks in music on the shore
Can purify the tiger's bloodstained den,
The worms that crawl about the dark world's core
Cry out aloud against the deeds of men.

Alas, the peace of these still hours and deep
Is but a dream that wanders from afar,
And the great Dreamer, turning in His sleep,
Smothers in darkness all our little star.

Yet in the gentle spirit of the wise
Light flashes out through many a simple thing,
The tired ploughman, with impassive eyes,
Knows in his heart that he was once a king.

He sees in dreams the crown long lost and dear,
That glittered on a fallen spirit's brow,
A shattered gleam from some far shining sphere
Has dazed the eyes of him who drives the plough.

The long brown furrows of the broken soil
Lead in straight lines unto the sunset's gates;
On high green hills, beyond the reach of toil,
The vision of the twilight broods and waits.

The silence folded in about the heart
Whispers strange longings to the broken soul,
That lingers in a lonely place apart,
Stretching vain hands to clasp the secret whole.

PROSERPINE IN HADES

Prosèrpina, who sought for poppies, fell
Beyond the reach of summer and sweet flowers,
Content to reign amongst the Lords of Hell,
Queen of gray shades and dreams and outcast Powers.

Was she content?—nay, Charon saw her weep,
When Orpheus came from the bright world above,
And sang his way across the twilight deep,
And found and lost his unforgotten love.

Was she not dreaming of fair meadow lands,
And sunlit rivers, when that Other came,
And the spheres broke like glass beneath His hands,
And souls rushed forth in spires of wandering flame?

The Light beyond all dreams of hours and days,
The Songs that break their way from sphere to sphere,
In broken gleams they pierced the sunless ways,
And bound her soul to hopes that once were dear.

PROSERPINE ENTHRONED

All day she reigns in dreams amongst the dead,
At night, strong-winged, she flames across the skies,
O'er the dark world her floods of light are shed,
The silver goddess of the pure and wise.

Oh soul that gropes on through the drowsy day
Amongst dead thoughts and deeds and fading flowers,
Dost thou not leave at night the foolish clay,
To join the starry throng of radiant Powers?

Rising amongst the gods on moonlit wings,
Dost thou not drive thy fiery wingèd steeds
Right through the sheer abyss and soul of things,
Forgetting the dull round of dreams and deeds?

Incarnate Spirit fallen from great light,
Doomed many days in darkness to endure,
Thou art yet Proserpine—the Queen of Night—
The Silver Goddess of the Wise and Pure.

THE BODY TO THE SOUL

You have dragged me on through the wild wood ways,
You have given me toil and scanty rest,
I have seen the light of ten thousand days
Grow dim and sink and fade in the West.

Once you bore me forth from the dusty gloom,
Weeping and helpless and naked and blind,
Now you would hide me deep down in the tomb,
And wander away on the moonlit wind.

You would bury me like a thing of shame,
Silently into the darkness thrust,
You would mix my heart that was once a flame
With the mouldering clay and the wandering dust.

The eyes that wept for your sorrowful will
Shall be laid among evil and unclean things,
The heart that was faithful through good and ill
You scorn for a flutter of tawdry wings.

You were the moonlight, I lived in the sun;
Could there ever be peace between us twain?
I sought the Many, you seek the One,
You are the slayer, I am the slain.

Oh soul, when you mount to your flame-built throne
Will you dream no dream of the broken clay?
Will you breathe o'er the stars in your pathway strown,
No sigh for the daisies of yesterday?

As you wander the shining corridors,
A lonely wave in the ocean of light,
Have you never a thought of the lake's lost shores,
Or the fire-lit cottage dim and white?

Shall not the dear smell of the rain-wet soil
Through the windless spheres and the silence float?
Shall not my hands that are brown with toil
Take your dreams and high desires by the throat?

Behold, I reach forth from beyond the years,
I will cry to you from beneath the sod,
I will drag you back from the starry spheres,
Yea, down from the very bosom of God.

You cannot hide from the sun and the wind,
Or the whispered song of the April rain,
The proud earth that moulds all things to her mind,
Shall gather you out of the deeps again.

You shall follow once more a wandering fire,
You shall gaze again on the starlit sea,
You shall gather roses out of the mire:
Alas, but you shall not remember me.

RE-INCARNATION

The darkness draws me, kindly angels weep
Forlorn beyond receding rings of light,
The torrents of the earth's desires sweep
My soul through twilight downward into night.

Once more the light grows dim, the vision fades,
Myself seems to myself a distant goal,
I grope among the bodies' drowsy shades,
Once more the Old Illusion rocks my soul.

Once more the Manifold in shadowy streams
Of falling waters murmurs in my ears,
The One Voice drowns amid the roar of dreams
That crowd the narrow pathway of the years.

I go to seek the starshine on the waves,
To count the dewdrops on the grassy hill,
I go to gather flowers that grow on graves,
The world's wall closes round my prisoned will.

Yea, for the sake of the wild western wind
The spherèd spirit scorns her flame-built throne,
Because of primroses, time out of mind,
The Lonely turns away from the Alone.

Who once has loved the cornfield's rustling sheaves,
Who once has heard the gentle Irish rain
Murmur low music in the growing leaves,
Though he were god, comes back to earth again.

Oh Earth! green wind-swept Eirinn, I would break
The tower of my soul's initiate pride
For a gray field and a star-haunted lake,
And those wet winds that roam the country side.

I who have seen am glad to close my eyes,
I who have soared am weary of my wings,
I seek no more the secret of the wise,
Safe among shadowy, unreal human things.

Blind to the gleam of those wild violet rays
That burn beyond the rainbow's circle dim,
Bound by dark nights and driven by pale days,
The sightless slave of Time's imperious whim;

Deaf to the flowing tide of dreams divine
That surge outside the closèd gates of birth,
The rhythms of eternity, too fine
To touch with music the dull ears of earth—

I go to seek with humble care and toil
The dreams I left undreamed, the deeds undone,
To sow the seed and break the stubborn soil,
Knowing no brightness whiter than the sun.

Content in winter if the fire burns clear
And cottage walls keep out the creeping damp,
Hugging the Old Illusion warm and dear,
The Silence and the Wise Book and the Lamp.

THE SOUL TO THE BODY

The lamp has gone out in your eyes,
The ashes are cold in your heart,
Yet you smile indifferent-wise,
Though I depart—though I depart.

I was the Joy that made you young,
The Light on the moon-haunted sea,
The Soul of each song that was sung,
And the Heart of Mystery.

I was the Harper old and blind,
The Breaker of Waves on the shore,
The Sorrow that cries on the wind—
I weep no more—I weep no more.

I was the Cloud that made your grief
In the gray twilight of the year,
Now you fall like a fallen leaf,
Without a tear—without a tear.

I was the Force that made you strong
From your brain to your finger tips,
And lifted your heart in a song,
And fashioned the words on your lips:

I was the Hour that made you great,
I was the Deed you left undone,
The soul of love—the heart of hate,
I was the Cloud that hid the sun.

I was the Light that made you wise,
I was the Dream that broke your heart—
Now the tears are dry in your eyes
Though I depart—though I depart.

In spite of the laughter of the fauns, Athene played on the pipes until she caught sight of her distorted face reflected in a stream. Many melodies could not compensate her for the troubled deeps of the Divine Beauty, so in sorrow she gave away her pipes to the children of this world.

Since then Wisdom has smoothed out the wrinkles of wrath and desire from her quiet brow, the crying of the Little Waves troubles no more the deep waters of Silence, the stars fade in the moonlight, and many sorrows have dreamed themselves into the one Peace.

For the voice of Wisdom and of the Silence is the music of the world.

THE THREE RESURRECTIONS
AND
THE TRIUMPH OF MAEVE

The three magic powers are Imagination, Will, and Love.
PARACELSUS.

"*Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.*"

THE THREE RESURRECTIONS

I

LAZARUS

Like driven cattle groping in blind herds
The hours passed me by, I stood alone,
And human dreams and light-winged prayers and words
Singed their frail wings about a flame-built throne.

Lost among outward things the poor limbs lay,
Holding no hint of the fled fire divine,
Like painted towers that crumble and decay,
When the God vanishes from some fair shrine.

Then from the broken edge and granite sheer
Of this harsh world, unto her heart of flame
A cry rang inwards, through the secret sphere,
Till the soul trembled at the body's name.

A wild wind sweeping through the fortressed gate
Of fire precipitous, in storms of will,
Did through the fibres of my soul vibrate,
And shook the Lilies on the Holy Hill.

Down in the deep abyss the deep voice sighed;
The pitiless voice that rhythmic tides obey,
Did through the inner courts in whispers glide,
And thrust my soul forth on her lonely way—

Yea, with strange fires down to the crumbling soil,
Amid the shambling herd of days and hours,
Drove the poor soul back to her patient toil,
And bid the slave rebuild her broken towers.

Oh Mary, dreamer without ruth or fear,
Brave through the radiant aether to descend
Into the holiest inner deeps austere,
Was this well done of Him who was thy friend?

Lo, when amid past homely hours serene,
One called to thee for service, thou didst stand
Silent, thine eyes fixed on the Light Unseen,
And the bread broken in thine idle hand.

Did then His voice call back to outward things
The radiant spirit wandering afar?
He bade us not to break the wild bird's wings
With heavy loads, nor wreck our sister's star.

Now does He break Himself the wing that flies
Too far, and quench the starlight on the wind,
Yea, the lost light still dazzles my sad eyes,
And the lost silence haunts my fevered mind.

How shall I thank Him? With but little zest
I grind the corn of Life in His dark mill,
Close to the hard heart of the Manifest,
I grope through days and hours that are His Will.

Ah, Love can drag the soul down from the spheres,
And bind her to the heart of human things,
And turn her high resolves to sighs and tears,
And break her wings, alas, and break her wings.

Still it may be hid treasure on the earth
Shall make this life of shadows worth its cost
Of dust and dreariness and death and birth
And broken wings and blue-lit radiance lost.

And though my soul athwart the great white way
Uncrowned, mysterious, weeping, starry-eyed,
Flared down into her humble house of clay,
Lonely amongst dim meadows to abide,

Yet strange it is that He whose voice rang through
The austere deeps found fire in clay concealed,
Found in the false the likeness of the true,
And His own inner will in each green field.

This thought of all the thoughts that flash and blaze,
Lightens the kingdom of my shadowy trust,
He knew the wisdom of the secret rays
Who drew my soul back to the alien dust.

This is the fixed heart of each changing dream,
The inner light that burns but for the blind—
The gold that lies beneath the flowing stream—
The buried treasure of a lonely mind.

Now He is dead, and no man understands
The mystery folded round each living heart,
What gulfs of mystic seas and unknown lands
Hold every man from his own soul apart.

But He dwelt ever on that desolate verge,
Amid the roar of winds and whirling tides,
And in His soul the moaning of the surge
And broken waters of the world abides.

His hidden thought was veiled by too much light;
Yet even when He wept I understood
That the stars shine on many a moonless night,
And bright streams glitter through the pathless wood.

Each crazy hut, all walls of mud or clay
Can hold the Eternal Beauty's light Divine.
This kingdom fails not, passes not away. . . .
He said so, who was Mary's friend and mine.

II

THE RETURN OF ALCESTIS

When wise Alcestis, risen from the grave,
Stood by Admetos for whose sake she died,
Her eyes were fierce that once were only brave
And her heart hard with an unearthly pride.

Admetos, the pale King who feared to die,
Feared the dead risen, shrank from the proud Queen,
Her white cheeks flushed with fading ecstasy,
Bright with the radiant breath of the Unseen.

He knew she saw straight through the kingly guise,
Into his soul's poor garret starved and grim,
Behind the threatening brow and flashing eyes,
Discerned the secret coward soul of him.

"Fear not, Admetos, the long road"—she said—
"Led me through wind and fire, made pure by these,
I bring no deadly vapours from the dead,
No dreadful grave dust clings about my knees.

"How shouldst thou, hearing but the last harsh sigh
Of the poor noisy flesh, dream of the smile,
Of the unheard, invisible ecstasy,
Lo, I have lived in light a little while!"

Then did Admetos praise her with soft phrase
And Love's dear silences, but she stood cold,
And slowly the fire died from her white gaze,
And her pale lips, once sweet, grew stern and old.

The King raved, "Thou whose stony eyes austere,
Lay humbled in the dust that I might live,
Hast thou no love for him once held so dear?"
And naught she answered save "O King, forgive!"

Men brought her children to her, with cold hands
She touched their hair and left them, murmuring
" No prince or priest or peasant understands
That this our life is but a shadowy thing."

At last Admetos tired of his dull bride
And went back to his comrades and his wine,
Whilst the cold silent Queen throned at his side,
Dreamed of the Vision and the light divine.

The coward King had but another dread,
A white-faced phantom stood beside his throne;
But sad Alcestis, risen from the dead,
Faced this dark world and her own soul alone.

And Heracles, whose death-defeating sword
Had saved her, looking in her starving eyes,
Knew he had robbed her of that just reward
That crowns the desolate courage of the Wise.

The freed bird comes not for her own delight
Back to the narrow cage and prison bars,
Lo, the wide air scarce held her far-flung flight
What time her will was throned beyond the stars.

III

PSYCHE IN HADES

When Psyche staggered through the darkness dense,
And stood in Hades, still she feared to taste
The feast of the dark gods of clay and sense,
But ate dry bread with tears and fled in haste.

Yet did she bear a gift from Proserpine
To Aphrodite in the spheres of light,
A casket holding the lost dream divine,
The perilous beauty of the Infinite.

As forth she journeyed on her homeward way
The Unseen Light lay clasped against her breast,
And through the darkness piercing ray on ray
Troubled the deeps of the Unmanifest.

Yea, down among the earth's uncared-for things
Rushed forth a sense of greatness unfulfilled,
Till in the darkness secret faëry wings
Deep in the grub's dim being stirred and thrilled.

And daffodils, whose petals of pale gold
Lie folded round the bulb's heart, buried deep,
Seemed in the darkness softly to unfold
As if the sun were shining through their sleep.

Then Psyche journeyed o'er the dangerous hills
And read the secret of forbidden streams,
And gazed into the hearts of daffodils,
And knew life's treasure-house of buried dreams.

Yet some men say the casket of white brass
She brought from Hades with such loving care
Held only the long sleep of flowers and grass,
And silences of dumb things everywhere.

She heeds them not, who knows the hidden worth
Of day and night and twilight, flower and weed,
The strong white roots that shake the crumbling earth
And frail wings of the sycamore seed.

Again she wanders through this world not ours,
Far from the unseen beauty, prison bound,
She seeks to steal the radiance of the flowers,
To ravish the ground's secret from the ground.

She knows no idle dream of fair and foul,
With the same rapturous breath she tells the tale
Of the high soaring lark or the brown owl,
The corncrake or the urgent nightingale.

For her the sea-thrift from her rocky ledge
Blazons the secret of the passing storm,
And briony leaves carve out in the green hedge
The decorate delight of sculptured form.

Her will the universal will allows,
The snake's dark poison, yea, and the wasp's sting,
She has no special favour for May boughs,
Nor craves long life for the frail painted wing.

And we in this dull house of tears and clay
Seek but her treasure, labouring everyone
To take the starlight with us on our way
Or steal some fire of beauty from the sun,

Till, in the darkness, banished Proserpine
Flashes her fierce torch in our shrinking eyes,
And thrusts into our hands the gift divine,
The magic treasure casket of the Wise.

Thus, when we pass again the long-closed door
That leads unto the Real, we bear afar
The will of seaweed on the barren shore,
The thought that holds in heaven star on star.

The riches of new powers accumulate
Have made of dying herdsmen gods and kings,
Life takes with both hands all the gifts of fate,
Till each poor soul grows worthy of her wings.

Oh, whiteness of the dawn and sacred fire,
The folded strength of the light sycamore seed,
And the hid rose's heart in the wild brier,
Are all the incarnate spirit's utter need.

The torn fibres of the soul are the price of Wisdom.

THE UNKNOWN GOOD

All dreams seem but a bunch of withered flowers
Beside the living joy from anguish rent;
We wrestle with the world's embattled powers
To mould the outline of the fair event.

With labour each great deed is hammered out,
On every battle-field the dead are strown,
Fair truth is carven out of anguished doubt,
The builder's heart lies crushed beneath the stone.

The price of every joy the soul may gain
Is paid in blood and sighing and sharp tears,
Who is a miser of the hoard of pain,
Shall win no great good from the crafty years.

Because the Ferry-man still takes his toll
Of fear and agony and sobbing breath,
Because of the torn fibres of the soul,
I know there is a great good gained by death.

POVERTY

One swallow dared not trust the idle dream
That called her South through fading skies and gray,
One spirit feared to follow the wild gleam
That drives the soul forth on her starlit way.

As the starved swallow on the frozen wold
Lies dying, with her swift wings stiff and furled,
So does the soul grow colder and more cold,
In the dark winter of this starless world.

Poorer than slaves of any vain ideal,
These are the saddest of all living things—
Souls that have dreamed the Unseen Light unreal,
And birds without the courage of their wings.

THE Eternal Beauty smiled at me
From the long lily's curvèd form,
She laughed in a wave of the sea,
She flashed on white wings through the storm.

In the bulb of a daffodil
She made a little joyful stir,
And the white cabin on the hill
Was my heart's home because of her.

Her laughter fled the eyes of pride,
Barefoot she went o'er stony land,
And ragged children hungry-eyed
Clung to her skirts and held her hand.

When storm winds shook the cabin door
And red the Atlantic sunset blazed,
The fisher folk of Mullaghmore
Into her eyes indifferent gazed.

By lonely waves she dwells apart,
And seagulls circling on white wings
Crowd round the windows of her heart,
Most dear to her of starving things.

The ploughman down by Knocknarea
Was free of her twilight abode;
In shining sea winds salt with spray,
She haunted every gray cross-road.

Some peasants with a creel of turf
Along the wind-swept boreen came,
Her feet went flashing through the surf,
Her wings were in the sunset's flame.

Beyond the rocks of Classiebawn
The mackerel fishers sailing far
Out in the vast Atlantic dawn
Found, tangled in their nets, a star.

In every spent and broken wave
The Eternal Beauty takes her rest,
She is the Lover of the Brave,
The comrade of the perilous quest.

The Eternal Beauty wrung my heart,
Faithful is she, and true to shed
The austere glory of Art
On the scarceness of daily bread.

Men follow her with toil and thought
Over the heavens' starry pride,
The Eternal Beauty comes unsought
To the child by the roadside.

NARCISSUS

I GAZE at my own form from morn till night,
Reflected in the stream, thus do I find
Great wisdom in flung curves of windblown light,
And am the jest and scorn of all mankind.

The ploughman bending over the dark soil
Dreams himself free and every flower his slave,
Well may he, pausing in his useful toil,
Frown at the thought of such an idle knave.

The shepherd labouring o'er the cloudy height,
The warrior storming the high fortressed hill,
Dream not at all of the Diviner Light,
Or the clear waters of the lonely Will.

The King who rules our lives with flame and sword
Sees not his own face mirrored in the tide,
He knows that every warrior calls him Lord,
And scorns to linger at the river-side.

All these have many deeds: here the dark firs
Dream on the edge of silence, mirrored green;
Deep in the river's magic crystal stirs
The image of the Seen and the Unseen.

Down in the river's heart strange broken dreams
Float luminous and tremble and recede,
And the lost torch of vanished wisdom gleams,
Caught in the green net of the water weed.

I gaze into my own eyes, finding there
The silver flame of Beauty's austere powers,
The sunlight dazzles me from my own hair,
My face is but a flower among the flowers.

Behold each shining curl, in watery curves,
Presses the circle of all living things
To my dull heart; the current breaks and swerves,
And back to heaven the drowning starlight flings.

THE HARVEST OF SILENCE

Gay is the call of the Sower going forth in the morning
refreshed from sleep,
Glad is the song of the Reaper coming home in the
evening laden with sheaves,
But in silence the lonely plough the fields, and sow, and
the patient labourers reap,
And in silence the Reaper comes home empty-handed on
desolate rain-soaked eves.

Beyond the clang of immortal verse, and the prayers of
men and whispers divine,
In the Holy of Holies, where lights burned dim, and only
the Wise Ones might go,
Corn reaped in silence by silent Reapers lay shrined in
the innermost shrine,
Whilst outside in the darkness the priestess fell tranced,
and the god paced to and fro.

ECSTASY

"God holds the soul attracted to Him by its roots."—PLATO.

He who seeks God has yet no need of wings,
Down in the deeps of being a dim road
Leads through the soul unto the roots of things,
And that abyss that is the gods' abode.

There in the elemental caves of night,
And dim recesses of unconscious mind,
The Wise Men's star burns with a steady light,
And a faint whisper lingers on the wind.

THE HUMAN ADVENTURE

On these wave-haunted sands the children play,
And silver twilight, clad in radiant gleams,
Comes laughing down the hill from Knocknarea,
With a gay company of wandering dreams.

The while a dog in careless ecstasy,
Trusting the guidance of a human hand,
Plunges forth headlong into the wild sea,
Brings but a stick and courage back to land.

So in the incarnation of the Wise
At times it seems a light and foolish whim
To brave the abyss for such a doubtful prize,
Plunged in wild waters of the twilight dim.

Yea, the tired spirit struggling with the tide
Of flowing life and monstrous waves of time,
Clutches but feebly her immortal pride,
And clings unto a broken bough of rhyme.

When the strong swimmer rescued from the wave,
Deep in the sunlit grass enraptured lies,
May she hold fast the secret of the grave,
The light of Peril in her dauntless eyes.

At twilight the room is full of the shadows of great waves.

TRAGEDY

"The radiance of heaven diffused all about me lifted up my soul to its own contemplation."—THE EMPEROR JULIAN.

THE soul dwells in the body as sunshine
Dwells in the air, wide, radiant, intense,
Drowned in untroubled blue the Light Divine
Would make transparent all the walls of sense.

Across the blue a ragged cloudlet sails,
A little wandering shadow delicate
Vails the sun's face, the supreme glory vails,
So small a cloud can hide a light so great.

A DWELLER BY THE OCEAN

OH very near the wide Atlantic shore
Is my white cottage homestead dark and low,
No idle neighbours stand about the door,
But great waves storming past the window go.

At times I dream the Atlantic infinite
Watching the sun rise over fields of foam,
And smile to think those floods of gracious light
Flow round the darkness of my narrow home.

When light fades from the green-lit fields of surf,
Wave shadows flicker on the white-washed wall,
I stir to flame the smouldering heap of turf,
And dream of greatness in my cottage small.

Then the wind moans athwart the unquiet sea,
Thin streaks of white across the ocean creep,
And, in my soul, forgotten ecstasy
Stirs restlessly and shudders in her sleep.

But when the bitter storm wind lifts and shakes
My little cottage, least of fragile things,
Out of the deeps of memory awakes
The soul's voice weeping o'er her broken wings.

Again the lost divine procession fair
Crosses the humble threshold of my mind;
A rush of wings makes pure the evening air,
And the dark hour gives sight unto the blind.

Then is the vail of woven fancy rent,
Into the eyes of truth again I gaze,
And read the doom of the long banishment,
My soul shrinks backward from the lightning's blaze.

Not pure enough for vision, and not just
Enough for justice, yet too pure and wise
To be thus lightly mingled with the dust,
And look at earth and sea with clay-built eyes.

Yea, the poor soul, the sorry charioteer,
By wings uplifted, by desire undone,
Seems to my heart that God dethroned and dear
Who yet was Lord of the far-shining sun.

Oh, fallen majesty, austere, unseen,
So weak and captive, easy to forget,
My heart gives homage to the Vailèd Queen,
Phoebus among the herds is Phoebus yet.

I who eat porridge from a wooden bowl,
Whilst one dim candle gutters in the gloom,
Do wonder at the greatness of the soul,
And narrow windows of the little room.

THE FALL

Alas, the twisted evil word.
Under the olives yesterday,
I heard a passing satyr say
Unto the small brown singing bird:
" Oh, fly from these dull garden thieves;
She who plucks daisies in the wood
Will surely come to nothing good.
There is but greenness in green leaves,

Who seeketh beauty findeth woe,
Down where the fairest flowers are,
Though light on light and star on star
The silver shrinèd lilies grow,
Though still the ancient Pan abides
And wild winds to the olives tell
The secrets of the oracle,
Whilst through dim glades the moonlight glides,
Till wood nymphs dream themselves divine,
Behind the twisted boughs and gray
The dark god lies in wait alway,
And the earth gapes for Proserpine. . . ."
Oh, they are wise, these woodland things,
Yet this is but a satyr's tale,
Told unto the nightingale,
And birds are conscious of their wings.

THE GODDESS OF THIS WORLD

"Matter exists for the sake of the Form which it contains."—PROCLUS.

QUEEN PROSERPINE, from yonder shining star,
Came long ago to our brown world of clay;
Because of her I keep my door ajar
For every thought or dream that comes my way,
Since to our world of brown
Prosèrpina came down.

Unto her will, men say, the giant toil
And little flowers of earth were over dear,
Now does she mix the sunlight with the soil,
And with the dusty clay a shining tear,
Prosèrpina the Queen
Has made the whole world green.

Queen Aphrodite, rising from the waves,
Finds rose and honeysuckle scents too sweet,
Finds the green grass of earth too full of graves
For the delicate white splendour of her feet—

The skies sprang blue and wide
For Aphrodite's pride.

Once long ago, lost amid dreams and lies,
Queen Pallas wandering held her dreadful shield
Between her and the Wisdom of the Wise,
And thus she lived a few short hours concealed,
Till at the end of day
From earth she fled away.

May Aphrodite reign in light afar
Where flowers are fairer and the skies more blue,
And Pallas find a perilous white star
Where all her dreams are true,
But Princess Prosperine
Has made our life divine.

And the green earth is hers, is hers,
The primrose springing from the sod,
Anemones beneath the firs
And laurels know no other god,
Day meekly follows night
For Proserpine's delight.

ANDROMEDA

Chained to the rock of this sheer world, the Will
Endures the slow wash of the rising tide,
And the cold stars above her far and still
Through the dark secret spheres in silence glide.

Who steals the sacred fire shall be the prey
Of elemental forces; think not thou
To cheat the gods who art not strong as they,
To crown with starry light a mortal brow.

Yet doth Andromeda, her labour past,
Stand among stars, herself a shining star,
So shall my will burn through the dust at last,
To that far sphere where truth and wisdom are.

Yea, by the magic force miscallèd death,
The vibrant drawing of the inmost light,
The hidden rapture of the failing breath,
The Blessed Vision of the fading sight.

Shall not one storm the gateway of that sphere
Where dwells the soul of our pale twilight skies,
And every austere beauty shines as clear
As winter starlight on the True and Wise?

THE ELM BOUGHS

The Elm boughs shudder in the sooty wind,
From their bright leaves the City children know
That somewhere the black world is glad and kind,
And through green woods the sunlit breezes blow.

All starved and stunted from the poisoned sod,
They shiver upwards through the stainèd air;
These are the battered pioneers of God,
Waving His green flag in the city square.

Thus in the gray-built city of the mind
Wave the green boughs of a few hostage powers,
Their secret whispered to the soilèd wind
Holds all our faith in Beauty's austere flowers.

Somewhere the fair and secret troops of Spring
Shine in strange colours icy clear and cold,
But I pass on through dark streets wandering,
Or dream a dream beneath the elm boughs old.

THE ARTIST

The spirit lonely in the spheres of night
Would draw down fire from other worlds and far,
And with a flash of the Diviner Light
Trouble the darkness of this narrow star.

As the young dreaming Christ, with power at play,
Moving among the earth's unsculptured things,
Moulded the crumbling balls of dust and clay
Into the swift delight of swallows' wings,

So do we gather up the stubborn soil,
Carving weak forms to hold the primal spark,
O God, have mercy on the artist's toil,
Lest the swift flame slip back into the dark,

Unfold the wisdom of those secret rays
That break in violet waves from sphere to sphere,
Piercing our starry nights and sunny days
With the strong rhythm of perilous fires and dear.

THE SECRET SPRING

"All our fathers were under the cloud."

A TALE that Maximus the Tyrian tells
How Alexander, flushed with warfare, came
To ask a question of the oracles
That speak to dreaming souls in Wisdom's name.

He asked not for the conquest of the world,
Nor craved to know the fortunes of his sword,
Should Victory's flaming wings be soon unfurled
Above the rout of the wild Persian horde.

As one deep sunk in an abyss of thought,
The warrior smiled a dim and gentle smile,
And prayed for wisdom long and vainly sought,
The secret of the sources of the Nile.

Thronèd above the high Egyptian gate
Still doth the unknown goddess radiant pale,
Queen over many waters, brood and wait,
No mortal hand can lift her shining vail.

And no man knows whence comes the magic tide
Of moving water that makes fair our dreams,
Though where hard soil once crumbled, scorched and
dried,
The roses nod their heads, the lily gleams.

Where once the land was waste, the harvest yields
Full measure down of corn and wine and oil,
The Mighty River floods our thirsty fields,
The waves of life soak through the barren soil.

The sacred stream o'erflows her banks of clay,
And who can tell where those great floods arise
That wash the barriers of the soul away
And purify the wisdom of the wise?

Still we, like that great king of long ago,
Must question idly 'twixt a sigh and smile,
From what deep spring do the bright waters flow—
Where are the hidden sources of the Nile?

REALITY

"Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul; and may the outward and inward be at one."—SOCRATES.

You think the joy and sorrow passionate
Of human life should be the singer's theme,
And man's old idle dream of love and hate
More real than the proud, fierce, immortal dream.

Not mine the hot desires and scornings proud
That shake the strings of a rose-crownèd lyre,
And all the blood-red passions of the crowd
Setting the singer's heart and brain on fire.

The secrets of the soul, have they no place
In the earth's heart, and should her children then
Despise the hand that moulds all beauty's grace,
And carves a dream out of the lives of men?

Shall, then, a song of this fair world hold all
The force of life out of the silence grown?
Nay, Helen held the sons of men in thrall,
But Psyche built among the gods her throne.

Though Helen's beauty ravaged a fair town,
And drenched the songs of men in blood and tears,
Yet before Psyche did that god bow down
Whose dreams are all the light of flaming spheres.

FOREBODINGS

Whate'er I touch to-night I spoil,
No rhythm sings, no light burns clear,
My weary fingers blur and soil
The glory of each crystal sphere.

The twilight lingers in the West
And light fades into burning flame,
Yet deep in the Unmanifest
Burns my soul's secret, why she came.

What pale hands, beckoning from afar,
Could bind her delicate fibres white
Round the earth's heart, whilst every star
In heaven shines with a purer light?

The secret of the sensible world
Smiles out of blue transparent skies,
Deep in the bulb's deep heart lies furled,
Mocks at the wise and the unwise.

This living will of thine and mine
Is stranger and more secret yet
To catch a glimpse of light divine,
And go away and straight forget.

Has, then, the spirit no bright goal
Beyond the radiant opal waves,
That one should mix with dust one's soul
And wander amongst dreams and graves?

To-night my spirit vails her face
And weeps beyond me lonely tears;
My heart shrinks back from her embrace
And all the dust within me fears.

THE DREAMER

All night I stumble through the fields of light,
And chase in dreams the starry rays divine
That shine through soft folds of the robe of night,
Hung like a curtain round a sacred shrine.

When daylight dawns I leave the meadows sweet
And come back to the dark house built of clay,
Over the threshold pass with lagging feet,
Open the shutters and let in the day.

The gray lit day heavy with griefs and cares,
And many a dull desire and foolish whim,
Leans o'er my shoulder as I spread my wares
On dusty counters and at windows dim.

She gazes at me with her sunken eyes,
That never yet have looked on moonlit flowers,
And amid glaring deeds and noisy cries
Counts out her golden tale of lagging hours.

Over the shrine of life no curtain falls,
All men may enter at the open gate,
The very rats find refuge in her walls—
Her tedious prison walls of love and hate.

Yet when the twilight vails that dim abode
I bar the door and make the shutters fast,
And hurry down the shadowy western road,
To seek in dreams my starlit home and vast.

THE SACRED FIRE

(LA MAIN DE DIEU.—*Rodin*)

FOLDED about my soul is deep content,
For well I know that every wild deed done
Is shaped by the strong hand that moulds the event,
The hand that broke the stars and lit the sun.

I weep not for false hopes and baffling foes,
Our lives are metal welded in the fire,
The earth's cold iron in the furnace glows,
The Forger bends hard facts to his desire.

The Sacred Fire that is the Forger's will
Flashes in speed about the wings of birds,
And lights the lonely sunset on the hill,
And flames across the world in human words.

That passionate fire and fierce has burnt its way
Down to the innermost abyss of sense,
And shakes the spheres and breaks our towers of clay,
And moulds the struggling shapes that issue thence.

DEATH

"I thought in going to the other world he could not be without a divine call."—PLATO.

AMONGST the daisies on the dewy lawn
The melody, with delicate steps and slow,
Comes radiant forth, from vibrant wood withdrawn
By the strong fibres of the patient bow.

About my heart a broken music clings,
Shut in this prison of senses five, I pray
That the tense fibres of the sobbing strings
May draw my soul from her close cell of clay.

No fumbling hands can loose the nerves that bind
That music folded in about my heart,
Thrilling with every breath of haunted wind,
In the far silent deep she dwells apart.

Patient she waits the Player's rhythmic touch,
The skill that draws her from her dark abode,
In austere joy not fearing overmuch
The lonely starlight or the open road.

POWER

The soul who knows herself dreams not of rest,
Brooding in secret o'er her new-found wings,
Having no fear of the Unmanifest,
Safe from the primal nothingness of things.

She breaks her way athwart the inmost fires
And moulds the force of life unto her mind,
Shaping the lightning to her fierce desires,
Shifting the currents of the unseen wind.

The world's six crownèd powers are but her slaves,
Unto the end of time, for good or ill,
Her rainbow wings beat out in rhythmic waves
Of fiery aether all her vibrant will.

And men who strive, and cry, and dream they rule
Are but in very truth the instrument
Of the wise soul, who carves with a sharp tool,
Sculptor of life and god of the event.

HEREDITY

THERE is one thing I know
About life, and thought, and art—
That my soul did not grow
Out of my mother's heart.

To the Wise and the Unwise
Life is a secret still,
But my spirit did not arise
Out of my mother's will.

Our dreams are weak and wild,
And nothing is made plain,
But my soul is not the child
Of my mother's brain.

Behold this muddy star
Knows the laws of mine and thine,
But the soul dwells afar
Child of the Light Divine.

These things I know because
In Life, and Thought, and Art,
The soul obeys strange laws
That break the heart.

THE CADUCEUS

THOUGH I lie all day on the green hillside, where the bracken waves and sighs,
And my soul is too happy for dreams, and my heart too heavy for deeds,
And the song of my rhythmic and idle hours is a scorn to the wise,
And my hopes float winged in the sunshine like the fragile sycamore seeds.

As I lie all day where the bracken sighs, frond upon
whispering frond,
Watching the way of the wind in the grass and the blue
sky overhead,
Know this, I am forging out of my will a strong and
delicate wand,
To guide the footsteps that falter and swerve in the ways
of the newly dead.

The labour of love is the equilibrium of the Universe, and magnetic circles are the strongholds of power.

MAGNETISM

"Matter, at any rate in its relations to other matter at a distance, is an electrical manifestation . . . and electricity is a state of intrinsic strain in a universal medium."—WHETHAM.

THE mountains tower in snow-built curves austere,
White and eternal peaks of carven mind,
Rather to me are the green grass blades dear,
That wave their delicate curves in the soft wind.

The mountain torrents down their rocky course
Rush with a rainbow riot of foam and strife,
Nearer to God is the dumb silent force
That burns behind the atoms' whirling life.

The hills are as the Earth's aspiring brow,
Covered with snowy peace and eagles' wings,
Yet do the green fields yield unto the plough
The secret of the buried life of things.

Deep down amid the forces of the soil
Lies hid the path of that electric spark
That rushes forth in flowers to crown our toil,
Yet holds the world together in the dark.

BEYOND

BECAUSE the world's soul looks me through and through
From every breaking wave and wild bird's wing,
I trust my own soul, knowing to be true,
Full many a worn-out old discrownèd thing.

Because of those unearthly fires that shine
Beyond Dūneira of the sunset waves,
I know that life is deathless and divine,
And dead men's souls rest never in their graves.

Because of twilight over miles of green
And one small fishing vessel sailing far,
On through the torment of wild winds unseen
I steer my little boat by a great star.

Because the rose is sweeter after rain,
Because fierce lightning strengthens the weak sod,
I know life flares behind the golden grain,
And ecstasy beyond the thought of God.

THE NEW RAINBOW

"Obscurity being perhaps the matter of every invisible colour."
PLOTINUS.

Of old the rainbow on the water's face
Showed forth to men the divine promise fair,
That no dark flood should quench the golden air,
Nor great wave rob the daisy of her grace.

Now in our souls mysterious rays are shed,
And stranger lightning of the later years
Uplifts our hearts unto the fortressed spheres
Beyond the violet, beyond the red.

This is the secret of the spirit's wings,
The strong mysterious promises of pain,
The shining of the rainbow after rain,
The strength and surety of eternal things.

Beyond all fires that wither in the west,
Immortal rays of the aethereal arc
Blaze the world's rapture out across the dark,
The rainbow of the will is manifest.

We that are sense encompassed, put our trust
In light that shines in darkness, the lost will
That hides in dim bulbs of the daffodil,
And raises radiant lilies from the dust.

No man can dream of beauty without light,
The blue lit Adriatic to the blind
Is but thick darkness and a wandering wind,
And cold death creeping through the shades of night.

We, worshipping the sunlight, have not found
The limits of desire in summer's green;
We pass from lovely forms to light unseen,
That draws forth beauty out of broken ground.

And find the winds and waves we dreamed exist
Are but pale pictures on the walls of sense
Of that far throbbing inner life intense—
The Life and Light of the Evangelist.

Eternal light beyond the rainbow's scope
Of coloured fire unseen about us gleams,
And no dark flood shall quench our golden dreams,
Nor death's deep waters rob our souls of hope.

RADIUM

The secret of this sensible world of ours
Blazed out for centuries close to human eyes,
Yet hidden from the wise and the unwise,
Folded in twilight, flaming forth in flowers.

For years the labourer drove his heavy cart
O'er treasure buried under the white road,
And amid unseen armies reaped and sowed,
And no man knew the flame in his own heart.

Till the wise dreamer with unflinching toil,
Brake through the narrow walls of sense and sight,
And to the dimness of the outer light
Dragged forth the ultimate secret of the soil.

Who thought to find this radiance in the sun,
This hidden glory in the heart of earth,
Deep in the shadow beyond death or birth
Lay hid the treasure of the All-seeing One.

And darkness seemed the end, now mystic light
Enfolds all shadows, surely each wild gleam
That once seemed but the radiance of a dream
Shines from some true star in the spirit's night.

Thus should one find at last the god who hides
In every wood, by whose lost light divine
The gods are beautiful and the stars shine,
And the white moon through clouds and darkness glides.

UNDINE

"The sun draws up all things out of the earth."—The Emperor Julian.

The one light throned beyond the starry spheres
Draws forth the Wise, the True, the Pure, the Just,
From the earth's heart beneath the mounded years
As sunshine draws the flowers from the dust.

Each primal force strives upward to the light,
Among the lily roots there is no rest,
And every delicate fibre frail and white
Would be in higher beauty manifest.

Down in the earth's heart the deep mining gnome
Seeks buried treasure under each green hill,
The river nymph is weary of her home,
The sylph would bend the wild winds to her will.

Who knows the fire spirit's hidden goal,
Or tracks the sylph through thunder-haunted skies—
But the nymphs toil for an immortal soul,
And men would toil for love if they were wise.

SURVIVAL

In the darkness I planted a rose
And it withered and died,
Now a poisonous fungus lives and grows
By the dead rose's side.

Full many an ill weed evil and old
In caves and dungeons thrives,
'Mid poisonous forces manifold
The bitterest life survives.

Out in the fields there's rain and sun
And a rustle of wind-blown wheat,
There's nought to shrink from and nought to shun,
The fittest is honey-sweet.

Honey-sweet from the heart of toil
The inner life of flowers,
The scorching sun and the rain-drenched soil,
The war of living powers.

There is nothing good, there is nothing fair,
Grows in the darkness thick and blind—
Pull down your high walls everywhere,
Let in the sun, let in the wind.

PEACE

I AM sad with the city's sadness, sick of toil,
Choked with smoke and tumult, weary of noisy mills,
Weaver of twilight hold me close to the brown soil,
Fold round my soul the lofty peace of thy green hills.

The lonely winds of twilight o'er gentle waters glide,
Grown secret with the magic thrill of unseen wings,
Here doth the soul of the wild land in peace abide,
And tired hearts find rest from world-old wanderings.

The great white daisies toss at ease in the long grass,
I will fling down my soul to rest in this green glade,
Where amongst waving fronds the silent angels pass,
And brown hares fawn about their knees noiseless and unafraid.

THE WORLD'S THIEF

THE light shines on the rich man's feast
From many a flickering brazen lamp,
God set that great star in the East
To guide the footsteps of a tramp.

Each long moon shadow shakes my soul,
And every gust of harsh wind flings
Rich treasure in my wooden bowl,
Beyond the dreams of the three kings.

The dark night is my coverlid,
I steal from God my grassy bed,
And in this beggar's bowl lies hid
The ravished secret of the dead.

The wind of God I make my own,
My soul was once His starry will,
Flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone,
His world is mine for good or ill.

Here on this wide star-haunted waste
I trespass on His lonely grief,
I have no need for fear or haste,
No prison waits for the world's thief.

His rainbow lights to me are dear,
And stolen moonlit forms divine
Shine in my soul's deep waters clear—
With God there is no mine nor thine.

THE MYSTIC

"Your soul has set sail like the returning Odysseus for its native land."—PLOTINUS.

NAY, though green fields are fair
And the fiords are blue,
I need a clearer air,
I need a region new,

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE

Out beyond the Northern Lights
Where the white Polar Day
To herself in silence sings,
Without thought of words or wings
The secret of a hundred nights.

I shall find there I know
The lost city of my birth,
Innocent white wastes of snow,
A new heaven and a new earth.
Neither lamb, nor calf, nor kid,
In those lonely meadows play,
All things calm and silent are
Underneath the Polar star,
Where all my dreams are hid.

I am sick of wind and tide—
Tired of this rocking boat
Creaking ever as we glide
Into the white waste remote,
Out there no sound is heard
Save the icebergs' crash and grind,
No human voice e'er shuddered through
The realms of white, the realms of blue,
Nor cry of a sea-bird.

Lying at ease in the dark ship
I watched the last pale night depart,
I dreamt I saw blue shadows slip
O'er the white snowfields in my heart;
And the world had grown so wide
There was room for all mankind—
The icebergs round about the Pole
Crashed in the silence of my soul,
And hemmed me in on every side.

In that crowded world of white
There are many joys unknown,
Without colour there is light,
Loneliness for the alone,

Heedless stars that blaze and shine,
O'er the world's untrodden edge,
You come with me, you who dare
Leave the cart and the plough-share,
For the white horizon line.

Over many seas we sail
Passing many peopled shores,
Like the Greek in the old tale
Homeward sailing from the wars.
Gentle voices bid us rest
From green isle or barren sedge,
" In our world all things are new,
We have passed away from you,
You must seek another guest."

Voices of enchanted time
Call to us to leave our ships,
Hyacinths of honeyed rhyme
Float from Aphrodite's lips,
We for Circe born unkind,
All the songs the sirens sing
Seem but idly to oppress
Hearts in love with loneliness,
Sails that flutter in the wind.

O'er the wide cold wastes serene
Rise the walls of wandering white,
Circles of strange gods unseen
In the electric arc unite.
Arctic faces flash and glide,
Glimmers many a flaming wing,
Where the aether strains to hold
The hard heart of the Manifold
All the greater gods abide.

IMMORTALITIES

"Again a voiceless statue is Apollo, and Daphne a shrub bewailed in fable." —GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

Now do men say that though the gods be fair
Phœbus who moulded beauty into rhyme
And Irish Niamh of the wind-blown hair
Are but the children not the lords of time.

It is not true, still does Apollo hide
In little songs the world's great mysteries,
And the white beckoning hands of Niamh guide
The hero-hearted over pathless seas.

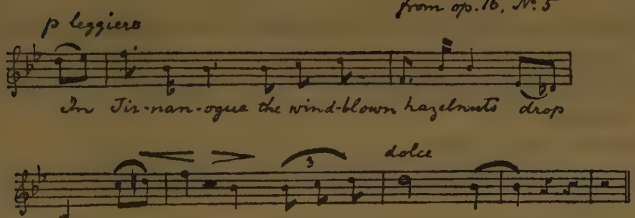
My secret treasure-house beyond the grave
Holds but the stars of heaven, the gods of Greece,
And some faint echo of the voice of Maeve,
And the One Voice that is the Eternal Peace.

THE TRIUMPH OF MAEVE

A ROMANCE

NOVEMBER 1902

from op. 16. No. 5



Max Mayer

THE TRIUMPH OF MAEVE

I HAVE seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the hill,
And I know that the deed that is in my heart is her deed,
And my soul is blown about by the wild wind of her will,
For always the living must follow whither the dead would lead—
I have seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the hill.

I would dream a dream at twilight of ease and beauty and peace—
A dream of light on the mountains, and calm on the restless sea;
A dream of the gentle days of the world when battle shall cease
And the things that are in hatred and wrath no longer shall be.
I would dream a dream at twilight of ease and beauty and peace.

The foamless waves are falling soft on the sands of Lissadil
And the world is wrapped in quiet and a floating dream of gray;
But the wild winds of the twilight blow straight from the haunted hill
And the stars come out of the darkness and shine over Knocknarea—
I have seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the hill.

There is no rest for the soul that has seen the wild eyes of
Maeve;
No rest for the heart once caught in the net of her yellow
hair—
No quiet for the fallen wind, no peace for the broken
wave;
Rising and falling, falling and rising with soft sounds
everywhere,
There is no rest for the soul that has seen the wild eyes of
Maeve.

I have seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the
hill,
And I know that the deed that is in my heart is her
deed;
And my soul is blown about by the wild winds of her
will,
For always the living must follow whither the dead would
lead—
I have seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the
hill.

PERSONS

MAEVE, *High-Queen of Connaught.*
FIONAVAR, *her daughter—a girl of sixteen.*
FLEEAS, *Queen of the Granaradians—a tributary Queen.*
HEROES *and* WARRIOR WOMEN *of Connaught.*
NERA, *a Harper in* MAEVE'S *Court who has been a year in Faery Land.*
FERGUS, *Chief of the Ultonian exiles.*
ULTONIAN EXILES: *Men who have left the service of the High-King Conchobar of Ulla, because of the treachery practised on the sons of Usna, and the sorrows of Deirdre.*
THE OLD WOMAN.
A DRUIDESS.
THE BLIND MAN.
THE LAME MAN.
CONAL, NERA'S BROTHER.
NERA'S FAERY LOVE.
A Spirit who was DEIRDRE, *and other Spirits.*

A large hall in MAEVE'S *palace at Cruhane. The room is thronged by the heroes and warrior women of Connaught.* MAEVE *sits on a high throne a little apart. She is dressed in a heavy golden robe with a gold crown on her head. She has a sword at her side, and is surrounded by a bodyguard of warrior women. The Ultonian exiles crowd together at one end of the room. Near them,* FLEEAS, *Queen of the Granaradians, is sitting on a raised seat not as high as* MAEVE'S *throne. Some of the warriors are drinking out of golden vessels and some of them are playing chess in the background.* MAEVE *is a beautiful woman with a long pale face and a mass of reddish-gold hair. She seems absorbed in profound and gloomy thought.* FERGUS *is standing near the window, looking out into the darkness. The door opens and* FIONAVAR *comes in.*

It is the night of Samhain (November Eve) when the door of the Magic Cave of Cruhane opened, and the inhabitants of unknown spheres were free to haunt the lonely hillsides and meadows of Connaught.

ACT I

FERGUS

The night is dark and Orchil's dreadful hosts
Wander the world, the moon is on the wane.

FLEEAS

Men say a company of evil ghosts
Camp round the magic cavern of Cruhane.

FERGUS

I saw nought save a dim star in the west.

FIONAVAR

As I came down the valley after dark,
The little golden dagger at my breast
Flashed into fire lit by a sudden spark;
I saw the lights flame on the haunted hill,
My soul was blown about by a strange wind.
Though the green fir trees rose up stark and still
Against the sky, yet in my haunted mind
They bent and swayed before a magic storm:
A wave of darkness thundered through the sky
And drowned the world. . . .

FERGUS

Saw you no monstrous form,
No green-clad host of warriors rushing by,
None of the Sidhe [1] women, oh Fionavar?

[1] Pronounced "Shee," the magic people who haunted the raths and forts of the West of Ireland.

FIONAVAR

I would have given my helmet and my crown
For the soft shining of a single star,
But darkness hung about me, held me down,
Though on the hillside burnt the mystic gleam
I saw the light yet saw not by the light,
For, self absorbèd in a magic stream,
It shed no rays out on the starless night.
A wizard fire and strange, and yet no fear
Entered my soul, but longing and fierce pain.

MAEVE

I would the queen's house were not built so near
The Hill of the Sidhe. . . .

FIONAVAR

Yea, 'twas but last Samhain
That Nera left us, he who ever heard
At twilight, Druid voices calling him;
To-night without a cry, without a word
The twilight fell about us, silver dim.
I would that I were Nera. . . .

FERGUS

Say not so,
Little thou knowest, oh Princess, of the Sidhe,
And the dull measure of his sleepless woe
Is but a faery tale to such as thee.

MAEVE (*suddenly*)

Fergus, dost thou remember Deirdre[1]?
Deirdre of the Prophecies. . . .

[*There is a silence and the wind begins to moan round the fort.*

[1] The story of Deirdre, the Harper's daughter, was the principal story of the Red Branch cycle. She was a beautiful woman, foster child to the King Conchobar, who loved her and murdered her lover Naisi out of jealousy. This treacherous deed caused, eventually, the destruction of the Red Branch brotherhood. Deirdre was also famous for her wisdom and prophetic powers.

FERGUS

Oh Maeve,
For her the blue sky has grown dull and gray
And the wind sighs and every breaking wave
Cries out her name.

MAEVE

Sing now the song
That thou didst make in the forgotten days
Of thy great sorrow, and Deirdre's wrong.

FERGUS

I will not sing that song for gold or praise
Of the Queens of the World. . . .

AN ULTONIAN

Will the Queen give gold?
Then will I sing a little song I made
When we left Ulla in the days of old.

MAEVE

I will give thee a sword with a sharp blade
For thy song, Fergus. . . .

AN ULTONIAN

Sing, oh Fergus, sing,
And may thy song be heard in the far hall
Of Emain Macha where the treacherous king
Has hung his golden armour on the wall.

[FERGUS *sings the exiles' lament for* DEIRDRE.

SONG

FERGUS

I hear the wise woman weeping, weeping for her lost dream,
And the bitter wars of the world and the cry of a broken wave;
Near the wounded heart of the earth, where the buried lightnings gleam,
I have seen the flaming opal burn dull in her grief-haunted cave.

I hear the waves' dim crying as they fall on the soft sea sand,
And the silver fires grow pale in heaven and the wind sighs;
I hear the wise woman sighing over the desolate land
And the deeds and the dreams of men, of men who are not wise.

I will leave Ulla for ever, and follow the wars of Maeve
For the Harper's daughter is dead and life is of little worth,
Through my soul there rings for ever the cry of a breaking wave,
Dark grows the flaming opal in the broken heart of the earth.

MAEVE

Yet wouldst thou bring a new war on the world?

FERGUS

Yea, but the wave sighs breaking on the shore
And the wind moans, by stormy spirits hurled
Into the fiery elemental war—

MAEVE

I am weary of war and the world's tears
And the cry of the sea and the wind's sighs,
I would I were beyond these crowded years
At rest with Deirdre of the Prophecies.

FERGUS

Art thou so weary, yet thy soul is young.

MAEVE

They who are weary change not nor grow old,
By them the sorrows of the world are sung,
Their weariness is as a harp of gold
That the wind plays on, every little wind
Of the old world is playing on my heart. . . .

[*The door opens and* NERA *comes in. He is laden with spring flowers, primroses and golden fern.*

Oh, I am weary of the dreams of the blind,
The loves that fail and the joys that depart
Like the white fading foam on faery streams
That the stars mock from far eternal skies,
Oh, I am weary of my many dreams. . . .

NERA

Shall not one little dream make the world wise?

[*He offers her primroses, which she twists in her hair, then he flings down his flowers in a shining mass at her feet.*

NERA'S SONG

I bring you all my dreams, oh golden Maeve,
There are no dreams in all the world like these
The dreams of Spring, the golden fronds that wave
In faery land beneath dark forest trees—
I bring you all my dreams.

I bring you all my dreams, Fionavar,
From that dim land where every dream is sweet,
I have brought you a little shining star,
I strew my primroses beneath your feet,
I bring you all my dreams.

I bring you all my dreams, your swords are sharp
Ready for battle, yet you smile and say—
Here is the dreamer with his foolish harp,
Now shall he wile an idle hour away,
I bring you all my dreams.

FIONAVAR

Why didst thou linger in the faery dūn,
Of that strange hosting wert thou not afraid?

NERA

Shall I not wander under the white moon
Whilst in my soul the moonlight does not fade?

MAEVE

Lo, far from here the moon shines on the sea,
Crowning the waves with silver as they break.

NERA

I have been false to a woman of the Sidhe,
I have forsaken the moonlight for thy sake.

MAEVE

What wouldst thou with me?

NERA (*aside to* MAEVE)

Lo, thou shalt dare
Beyond all daring, joy and love and fame,
Stand where the spheres part, face the two-fold glare
And quench the Outer in the Inner Flame.

FERGUS

These flowers at Samhain are an evil sight,
As if old Winter's wiles had robbed the May,
For Autumn roses and pale fires at night,
Wandering, lead the foolish world astray.

NERA (*dreamily*)

I have seen roses growing at Samhain
In the enchanted gardens of the Sidhe,
The stars that shine above the magic plain
Roam as they will and every flower is free,
I have seen roses growing at Samhain. . . .

FERGUS

Each flower should have its season and its time,
Thus every changing month is doubly dear.

NERA

Oh Queen, the faery flowers are free to climb
At their own wandering will up the steep year.

MAEVE

The gardens of the Sidhe must be more fair
Than any land I conquered in old days.

NERA

Yea, there is neither law nor hatred there,
But all things live at peace for their own praise.

MAEVE

I would that land were mine, for I have won
Praise with the sword and now am growing old.
Men tell of ancient wars and great deeds done
Yet I rejoice not, and my heart is cold.

NERA

Thou hast stormed the world with a sword, oh Maeve,
And bent the dreams of the earth to thy will,
Yet close to thy fort is the haunted cave
And a star shines over the faery hill
Free as the foam on a breaking wave.

Fearless of thee are the dreams of the dead,
The shadowless host know thee not for their Queen,
Before thee the dreams of the world have shed
Their golden petals and branches of green,
Yet what are they to the dreams of the dead?

On a primrose bank thou shalt build thy throne,
In the Hill of the Sidhe where the great dreams dwell
They have carved thy name on a Druid stone,
And thy gold crown lies in a haunted well
On the Hill of the Sidhe thou shalt build thy throne.

MAEVE

Alas, I am weary of building thrones.

NERA

Out there the kingdom waits for thee, oh Maeve.

MAEVE

I hear men sighing with most bitter moans
I have heard the cry of a breaking wave
I weep for the sad world.

NERA

Heed not these things
Heed but the laughter of a magic stream
And the glad song outshaken from swift wings.
The sorrow of the world is but a dream—
All winter I have seen the Spring's desire
Bloom in the magic gardens of the wise,

Shall not these primroses, pale flames of fire,
Light up the joy that slumbers in thine eyes—
Maeve of the Battles, Queen of Dreams and Fire.

MAEVE

A gold crown hidden in a haunted well!
Strange are thy words, oh Nera, and weighed down
With many heavy meanings.

AN ULTONIAN

He could not tell
A primrose garland from a golden crown!

ANOTHER ULTONIAN

I like not songs like these, the dreaming Queen
Is fooled by every bard that walks the land.

ANOTHER ULTONIAN

Were I the King, this folly had not been,
I would put down the bards with a strong hand.

[*A murmur among* MAEVE'S *followers.*

FLEEAS

Friend, thou art surely mad or drunk with wine,
And thy distemper makes thee over-bold—

NERA (*to* MAEVE)

Oh Queen, I bid thee conquer what is thine,
A crown of primroses, or bronze, or gold.

MAEVE

This is the world's most desolate enterprise.

NERA

Men follow wandering fires of love and hate
And lonely is the labour of the wise,
The dreams of all the world are desolate.

MAEVE

Nay, I have many friends.

NERA

The dreaming sea
Has many waves, yet is it none the less
Lonely.

FLEEAS

There are none here who would not die for thee!

MAEVE

Friends, underneath the blue eternal skies
Of that green land where the free stars look down:
In the midst of a haunted well there lies
A crown of primroses, the magic crown
Of the Sidhe people, guarded night and day
By monstrous warriors. Life lightly hurled
Into the abyss were a small price to pay
For perilous lordship in that unseen world.
I would go forth among those shadowless ones,
Groping through wind and fire from height to height,
Daring to climb beyond all stars and suns
To join the Inner and the Outer Light.
Yea, I will tear aside the world-old Vail.
Friends, will ye follow me if I go forth
To do this deed?

[*The* ULTONIANS *murmur together.*

FERGUS

'Tis but a faery tale,
A woman's dream, the heroes of the North
Would smile at such a fancy. . . .

AN ULTONIAN

Yea, it seems
The crown she dreams of is not even gold!

MAEVE

Oh, Fergus, mockest thou at women's dreams?
Thus didst thou smile when Deirdre foretold
The fall of Ulla, now the patient years
Hang ivy on the ruins of her pride.
Hast thou forgotten all thy bitter tears,
The woe of the world when Usna's children died?
Hast thou forgotten Deirdre, art thou blind
That thou canst dream that wisdom dwells with scorn?
So winter sunshine fades on the cold wind,
And the snow lies not on a summer morn;
Thus has thy wisdom vanished!

FERGUS

Nay, fair Maeve,
The wisdom of the world is mine to bow
To an evil fate, yet ere men heap my grave
My star shall triumph, and though I serve thee now,
Being a man, I shall rule in the end.
Let it not grieve thee that I being a man
Am greater, for no warrior soul could bend
To a woman's rule since the world began. . . .

[*There is a deep murmur of anger among the warriors of* MAEVE'S *bodyguard. They press round* FERGUS. *The* ULTONIANS *crowd together.*

FLEEAS (*to* FERGUS)

There is an end of patience in my soul:
Lo, I have suffered thee for many days
Thus creeping underground like a blind mole
Among the worms, and finding nought to praise
In the blue sky above thee, the great Queen
Who gave thee life and shelter in her host
And saved thee with her sword, else hadst thou been
No man at all, but a poor whining ghost,
Slain by the Red Branch in some obscure feud.
Behold the Queen asks but a small reward
For her great deeds, and a light gratitude
Of silence, and the service of thy sword,
And this were well for thee. . . .

FERGUS

Yet would I not obey
A woman. . . .

FLEEAS (*to* MAEVE)

Oh Queen, my fierce sword burns my hand
Red hot for battle. . . .

NERA

Ah, be not led astray
By such an idle deed, in faery land
The wars of the vain world are put to scorn,
The wind sighs low o'er many a reedy pool,
And sweet sounds wander through the shaken corn,
And no man stays to battle with a fool.

MAEVE

Put up thy sword, oh Fleeas, little worth
Thy loyal rage is his wild threatening,
Who trusts no man nor woman on the earth
Save the Red Branch and his thrice treacherous King.

[*The* ULTONIANS *murmur.*

FLEEAS

Wilt thou let him go free? . . .

MAEVE

Free as the air.

FLEEAS

A year ago thou wouldst have struck him down
With the sword. . . .

MAEVE

Nay, friends, I have done my share
Of foolish deeds and won a fierce renown,
Now I have dreamed a dream and the sword gleams
Idle in my hand—let him go free,
Some day he will build the city of his dreams,
I go to conquer mine.

FLEEAS

My grief that such as he
Should build a city.

MAEVE

By the Gods it is willed
That foolish men should dream a dream of pride
And wrath, yea, and that every man should build
The city of his dreams. The world is wide
For such as thee, oh Fergus, go thy ways.

FERGUS

Nay, Queen, I did but question in my heart,
Drive me not forth after so many days
In this great host, I am loath to depart.

MAEVE

So be it, Fergus, have thou thy desire.
[*She turns from him to the people of Connaught.*
Friends, will ye follow me to distant lands,
To storm the city of the magic fire
And wrest the throne of the world from ghostly hands?
[*She stands beside her throne. Her gold robe and crown glitter in the torch-light.*

FLEEAS

Thou art the bright star of my dreams, I came
To this dark world that I might follow thee.

AN OLD WARRIOR

I will follow thee as smoke follows flame—

A WARRIOR

And I as the little waves of the sea
Follow the moon's will high in heaven above—

A WOMAN WARRIOR

Lo, I will serve thee as men serve for gold.

ANOTHER WARRIOR

And I as a lover following his love
Through the length and breadth of Eirinn, as of old
Finn followed Grania.

A WOMAN WARRIOR

Lo, like a dreamer seeking for his dream
I will go with thee even to the world's edge,
Where moonlight withers and pale waters gleam
And the wind whispers through the faded sedge.

CHORUS OF WARRIORS

Yea, we will follow thee unto the end,
Seeking thy smile as flowers seek the sun.

MAEVE (*moving forward with outstretched arms*)

Ye shall go with me as friend goes with friend,
Thus in all freedom shall this deed be done.

[*The people of Connaught cry out "Eirinn for Maeve —Maeve of the Battles." The* ULTONIANS *join in the cry.* MAEVE *signs to them—there is a hush.*

MAEVE

To arms, to arms, ye who would do my will.

[*The trumpets sound.*

NERA

I have no sword, yet would I follow thee.

[MAEVE *signs to an attendant, who brings her a sword. She offers it to* NERA. *He takes it and lays his harp at her feet.*

NERA

Fairer than starlight on the magic hill
Is thy white sword, Queen of the Western Sidhe.

MAEVE

Be thy soul armed against wind and flame
And all the magic wars of faery land.

[*She takes the harp in her hands lovingly and winds round its strings a wreath of primroses. She lays it on the gold-embroidered cushion of her throne.*

NERA (*gazing earnestly at* MAEVE)

Beautiful as a song is thy great name,
Fairer than the gold harp is thy white hand
As thou art more than music, for thy sake,
Oh Maeve, I have cast all my dreams aside. . . .

MAEVE

Take back thy dreams, let not thy heart break
For a lost song and one vain hour of pride.

NERA

Nay, I will follow thee, Maeve of the Bright Hair.

[*He kisses her hand, and stands on one side.* MAEVE *begins to descend the steps of her throne.* FIONAVAR *rushes forward impetuously.*

MAEVE

What wouldst thou, beautiful Fionavar?

FIONAVAR

I would go with thee, I would have my share
Of thy great deeds, and when the songs are sung
My name shall be with thine as our hearts beat
Together. . . .

MAEVE (*sadly*)

I fear for thee, thou art young—

FIONAVAR

Oh Maeve, my youth lies there before thy feet,
Tread not thou down this glory of bright days
Into dull ashes.

MAEVE

I will quench no fire
Nor set my foot on any love or praise,
Yet is my heart now like a broken lyre,
Have thou thy will. . . .

[*The warriors cry out again "Eirinn for Maeve—Maeve of the Battles." They divide themselves into two lines, leaving a space between.*

NERA

Mourn not, oh golden Maeve,
Happy are they who for thy sake are slain
Though they lie songless in the cold grave.

[*The trumpets sound again and* MAEVE *passes down the room between the lines of warriors, who salute her as she goes. She is followed by* FLEEAS *and* FIONAVAR. *The warriors and attendants form themselves into a procession and go out after her.* NERA *is left alone. The music dies away in the distance. He has the sword in his hand, which he holds clumsily, and gazes round him disconsolately.*

NERA

Alas, I would I had my harp again.

[*He goes out slowly after the others as the scene closes.*

ACT II

A grassy bank covered with primroses by the side of a well. In the background, on the gentle slope of a hill, is the magic cave of Cruhane. The ivory gates at the cave's mouth are wide open, and the cave is full of light. On every side an enchanted forest stretches into the distance. Leaning against the gate are the guardians of the well. One of them is blind, the other lame.

THE BLIND MAN

I hear a low sound as of falling leaves
In the dim wood, or else a little wind
Stirs in the fern and shakes the yellow sheaves
Of rustling corn. I would I were not blind—

THE LAME MAN

Nay, I see nothing—

THE BLIND MAN

If I had thy sight
I would see more than thou—

THE LAME MAN

There's naught to see,
Come, friend, we should be back ere night
In the King's Hall.

[*They stumble away together and disappear in the cave.* MAEVE *comes in followed by* NERA. *She is in her battle-dress, a golden helmet on her head, dented by many blows. She has a heavy sword in her hand. She looks round and sinks down wearily on the bank.*

MAEVE

I heard the fading voice of the Sidhe.
Play to me, Nera, for my soul has need
Of music.

NERA

Alas! I cast my harp aside
At Rath Cruhane.

MAEVE

That was an idle deed.

NERA

A vain deed vainly done, the songs abide
Deep in my heart and cry about my soul
Seeking in vain for the sweet answering cry
Of the three strings.

[NERA'S FAERY LOVE *comes in from the cave at the back. She is dressed from head to foot in a long purple robe. She goes up to the well.*

FAERY

Alas for the thief who stole
My golden harp, under the rain-haunted sky
Of Eire he shall sing Danaan songs:
Alas the shining dreams that fade and cease,
Oh, magic water, heal my many wrongs
And wrap my soul about in songless peace.

[*She leans over the well drinking the water, which she scoops up in the hollow of her hands.*

NERA

She drinks the waters of the faery pool
And dreams thus to find solace for her grief,
And by their potent magic to make cool
Her burning heart.

FAERY

Oh, like a fallen leaf
That no green spring with living sap renews
Is my dead soul—in vain and all in vain
Are faery waters and flower-dazzling dews.
Oh, Nera, give me back my harp again.

[*She goes out, mournfully wringing her hands.*

MAEVE

Who is this woman?

NERA

Nay, I do not know,
Some faery dreamer who dreamed of the earth
As we might dream of a star, and found woe
And gave her harp away for a mortal's mirth.

MAEVE

Did he not love her?

NERA

Yea, for a little while.

MAEVE

The dream of conquest withers in my heart,
I would go back to the world where lovers smile—

NERA

Is the land not fair that thou wouldest depart?
Thou hast not even seen the faery host.

MAEVE

What is thy faery host to me? I have seen
The sorrows of faery land!

NERA

Let not the thin drawn ghost
And shadow of grief pull at thy heart-strings, Queen,
This was no sorrowing girl, but a pale shade
Mourning an unreal woe with fickle breath
To turn thee from thy purpose, a trick played
Or a dream dreamed by the lords of life and death
For our undoing.

MAEVE

These same lords
Are strong to bend the whole world to their will,
They bind our souls about with mighty cords.

NERA

Yet is the soul free on this wind-swept hill
From the bonds of fate.

MAEVE

Nay, I cannot tell.
A load of grief about my spirit lies,
I would drink of the waters of the magic well,
The magic waters bring dreams to the wise.

NERA

Drink then, oh Queen, and dream of faery springs
That fill the long grass with soft shining sounds
Most musical, struck from the silver strings
Of the world's harp, streams that flow underground
Tunnelling the hard earth with a buried song.

[MAEVE *drinks the water. She falls immediately into a deep sleep, lying on the grass propped against the stone-work of the well.* · NERA'S FAERY LOVE *comes to the edge of the wood and beckons to him. They wander away together among the trees. The air is full of the thin and melodious voices of spirits who flit past on their way back to faery land.*

FIRST SPIRIT

This is the woman who drank from the well.

SECOND SPIRIT

Oh, she is of the bright immortal throng.

FIRST SPIRIT

Through her weak hands the enchanted waters fell.
I heard them fall.

SECOND SPIRIT

Yet is she not as fair
As any spirit?

THIRD SPIRIT

She is mortal born.
I hear the west wind rustling through her hair,
Her heavy human hair, like waving corn
That shivers in the breeze, also she sighs
In her sleep, as the wind sighs in the reeds.

FIRST SPIRIT

We will watch her dreams.

SECOND SPIRIT

Yea, for men grow wise
In sleep and their dreams are greater than their deeds.

[*A very glorious spirit pauses in her flight, and spreading out great wings, floats down to the ground and stands among the primroses by the side of* MAEVE.

SPIRIT

What wouldst thou, Maeve, why dost thou come here
With a sword?

MAEVE

Lo I have dreamed magic dreams
Of conquest and a gold crown to be won,
And a sharp sword that in the moonlight gleams.

SPIRIT

Here shall no deed of violence be done,
No crown be won or heart pierced with the sword,
Here all the battles of the world must cease,
And a white shining peace is the soul's reward.
Why dost thou come here troubling our white peace?

MAEVE

I am but the leader of a great host.

SPIRIT

No host can enter into this pure land,
But every desolate and lonely ghost
Finds shelter here. The sword in the warrior's hand
Is turned against his heart, and the dream in his eyes
Has led his soul astray—unto his battle car
The gates are shut for ever.

MAEVE

Spirit most wise,
Fairer than any dream, or flower, or star,
Who art thou?

SPIRIT

I am she who was called
Deirdre!

MAEVE

Oh Beauty like a venomous white flame
That wasted Ulla!

SPIRIT

Shrink not thou appalled
From my great sorrow. Beauty knows no shame
For the wild dreams and hollow deeds of fate.
Nay, what was I but a glass the gods held up
To the souls of men grown fierce with love and hate—
For the drunkard's deed blam'st thou the golden cup
That held the wine—or the emblazoned page
For the wars chronicled—or the mirror's face
For the dark world of evil deeds and rage
Reflected there?

MAEVE

Oh Queen, thou art the grace
And glory of the world, Beauty the passionate Rose
And mystic flower of life, and the dull wars of earth
Flow from thee even as a river flows
Down from the sunlit hills where dreams have birth.

DEIRDRE

I dream no dream of war, ere light burns gray
In the world the hosts that follow thy wild will
Shall wither like dead leaves and fall away
Blasted by magic of the inviolate hill.

MAEVE

Queen of the storm-built citadel of dreams
And all the radiant kingdoms of the wind—
Hast thou forgotten how the sword gleams
In the world, and put the old days out of mind?

DEIRDRE

I have seen many wars and hard deeds done—
And now live peaceful days of glad intent:
Yet Naisi pines for the light of the sun,
He wields no dream sword in his banishment

As I do joyfully, a peaceful sword
Sharp edged with dreams and as a flame of fire
Deep in the soul of many a fierce war-lord,
That burns away, oh Queen, thy heart's desire,
And flames in the breast of young Fionavar,
Dividing many spirits from their peace.
And this my sword is as a fiery star
Shining at evening when all battles cease.
I go to Naisi, he sits sullen-eyed
With folded wings and dreams still of the wars
Of the world, and the Red Branch and his lost pride.
[DEIRDRE *goes away sighing.*

MAEVE

May thy star guide his soul to peaceful shores.

DEIRDRE

May a great lonely peace abide with thee.
[*The spirit of* DEIRDRE *vanishes. There is a short silence broken only by the beat and rustling of many wings. Gradually this sound dies away in the distance and all is still. The guardians of the well come out of the cave.*

THE LAME MAN

I see their white spears shining in the glen
Where green boughs toss like an unquiet sea,
I hear the tramping of a thousand men.

THE BLIND MAN

Lo, 'tis the army of world-conquering Maeve.
Let us make fast the gates with bolt and bar
Against the fury of the flowing wave.

THE LAME MAN

Oh, dost thou see the young Fionavar
Smile at the people from her car of state
With a fierce smile? Men call her the Fair-browed—

THE BLIND MAN

Bar up the gate, oh friend, bar up the gate.

THE LAME MAN

Like a tall flower she sways above the crowd,
And there is Fleeas of the wild will,
And Fergus, and strange warriors of the north.
Come, we will bar the gate—in the faery hill
There shall be peace.

[THE BLIND *and* THE LAME MEN *go together into the cave. The gates shut behind them with a loud and ominous clang.* NERA *and his* FAERY LOVE *come out of the wood.* MAEVE *is still asleep. There is a sudden dimness behind the ivory gates.*

FAERY

Oh Nera, go not forth
Into the world again. There is a hard frost
In the world, the sky is dull and gray
As the gray shuddering willows tempest-tossed,
Or the pale years that melt like smoke away
Over dim meadows.

NERA

Yet should I not mourn
For the brown pools and purple wastes and hills
Of Eire and the blue sea and rustling corn,
Are they not more to me than many ills—
What wilt thou give me fairer than these things?

FAERY

I gave thee my harp, what wouldest thou more?
Is there not moonlight in the silver strings,
And the wind and the waves sighing on the shore?

NERA

Even as my love so do my dreams increase:
I have dreamed of a great sword that overcame
The world.

FAERY

I have nought to give thee but peace. . . .

NERA

My soul is wrapped about in warring flame.

FAERY

Alas! the gate is shut, it is too late—
The way is barred against us—we are exiled
From all our dreams—

NERA

This is the deed of fate.
I will go back to earth and, like a child
Of faery land, make music of my heart's desire
And sing sweet songs and find rest by Maeve's fireside.

FAERY

I have no place by any mortal fire.

NERA

Nay, say not so, beloved, the world is wide
For wandering, and these ivory doors
Shall stand open unto all souls again
In a year's time.

FAERY

Oh, many weary wars
Shall be in the world, and many heroes slain
Ere I go back to the land of my delight—
Alas! Alas!

[FLEEAS *comes in followed by* FIONAVAR *and attendants.*

FLEEAS (*in a loud voice*)

Where is the High-Queen Maeve?

FAERY

Behold your Queen!

FLEEAS

Alas, oh Maeve, the host reels back with fright
Crying for their leader.

NERA

Lo, she has drunk
Of the well water—doubtless she has seen
A shining vision—spirits talked with her
But now. . . .
See how she smiles, her head has sunk
Among the primroses, long grasses stir
About her quiet fingers.

FLEEAS

She left the host
In secret, panic has taken her place,
And while she communes idly with a ghost,
Leads us to dire confusion and disgrace.

MAEVE (*waking*)

What heavy news, oh Fleeas, dost thou tell?

NERA

The sword has broken in the hero's hand.

FLEEAS

There's mutiny in the host.

MAEVE

It is well.
I would go lonely into faery land.

FAERY

Alas! Alas! thou canst not enter there
Though thou art Queen and leader of this war
And men tell of thy great deeds everywhere.

MAEVE

I am a beggar at the ivory door,
Bereft of deeds.

FAERY

Alas, the door is barred. . . .

MAEVE (*fiercely springing to her feet*)

No door is barred against the High-Queen.
[*She goes up to the gate and tries to open it.*
Sound the trumpets, call the Queen's guard, Fleeas!
[FLEEAS *signs to an attendant who sounds the trumpet three times. There is a long silence.*

FLEEAS

Alas! they dare not set foot on the green
Of the haunted hill.

MAEVE (*storming*)

Cowards and Knaves!
Now will I rouse my soul from dreams, I swear
By the oath of my people many new-made graves
Shall witness of this hour, ye do not dare
To face a spirit's wrath—is there rage like mine
Think ye in faery land—oh, ye have found
Safety—I will pour out your blood like wine
At a banquet, ye shall seek sunlight underground

And find joy sailing in a sinking ship,
And mercy in the lightning, pray the storm
To shelter you, and fire to cool a fevered lip,
Yea, with an icicle make your hearts warm,
Ere ye win pity from my outraged soul.
Oh Nera, where is then the golden crown
Of thy vain story? Is this the end and goal
Of all thy dreams?

NERA

There is peace for thee beyond the gates.

MAEVE

Cease the soft flowing of thy honeyed tongue
Made sweet with many lies, my sick soul hates
Thy flattery—Now shall no song be sung,
But every bard accursed for thy sake.
Nera, the dreamer, whose songs broke the heart
Of a Queen that the World's wars could not break.

NERA

Cease thou thy railing, I will depart
Oh terrible Queen, alas, my songs
Have broken my own spirit.

FLEEAS

This is no time
For words, the host has broken up in separate throngs,
And evil thoughts are ripening into crime
In a blaze of flaming fear. . . .

MAEVE

Ye faithful ones speed with swift feet
Down to the valley where these warriors hide,
And bid them ponder in their safe retreat
The words ye have heard on the mountain side.

[FLEEAS, FIONAVAR *and attendants go out,* NERA *lingers.*

MAEVE

Farewell, I will not see thy face again
Nor shall thy voice drop poison in my mind.

NERA

Yet shalt thou hear my tears fall in the rain,
And my sad spirit cry along the wind,
My homeless spirit knock at the shut doors
Of thy proud soul. Bend low thy passionate brow
Oh Queen, thou hast not conquered grief in thy wars.
Thou shalt be lonely as I am lonely now,
Exiled as I am exiled, thou shalt weep
As I have wept for thee. . . .

MAEVE (*listening intently*)

I heard a little dreamy din,
A pebble fall into the abyss of sleep,
A sudden noise as if one moved within
With stealthy steps. . . .

NERA

Thou hast broken my life,
Oh Queen, as a brand is broken for the fire.

MAEVE

Why dost thou vex my soul with this vain strife?

NERA

I have given thee my dreams and my golden lyre.

MAEVE

I have given thee a sword.

NERA

A sorrowful gift.

MAEVE

Yea, sorrowful as any lying tale
Fashioned with empty longings to uplift
The burden of grief when all our false dreams fail.

NERA

These are not gracious gifts, take back thy sword.
[*He flings the sword down on the grass.*

MAEVE

There is some one singing. . . .

NERA

She hears me not,
I served her with my soul for this reward.

MAEVE (*breathlessly*)

A gracious melody.

NERA

This is their lot
Who serve a Queen's will.

MAEVE

Such gentle sounds
Flow in soft waves past the coarse gates of sense
Nor deign to enter.

NERA

Oh, this doth pass the bounds
Of patience—This is the end—I will go hence,
Yet will I drench her sweet name with my tears
Once more—farewell, Maeve, beautiful friend.

MAEVE

Alas! why dost thou trouble my tired ears? . . .

NERA

Oh Meave, must I leave thee thus, is this the end
Of all my joy and love?

MAEVE

Why wilt thou tease
My soul with memories, such joys are past
For me, I have seen fairer things than these,
And a new song holds my spirit fast.
Open the gates, oh ye of faery birth,
To a poor spirit desolate and alone.

NERA (*going out*)

I will go back to the cold earth
Where my harp lies near an empty throne,
And silence reigns from door to golden door,
And pale winds blow from the unquiet sea
Over Rath Cruhane, bringing news of war.

[*He goes out.* MAEVE *sinks down on the ground with a cry.*

MAEVE

Oh wilt thou not open the gate to me
Deirdre?

[*A light flickers and vanishes behind the ivory gate, and the hillside begins to grow dark as the scene closes.*

ACT III

Scene I

Interior of a tent in Maeve's *camp at midnight.* Fleeas *comes in.*

FIONAVAR

Hast thou been the rounds, is all well in the camp,
Dost thou bring news?

FLEEAS

Nay, the long hours creep
Onward in silence, in vain the signal lamp
Burns o'er the Western gate, and all men sleep,
Save the slow guard who pace with measured tread
To stir their watch fires, no other sound is there.

FIONAVAR

Oh, is she among the living or the dead
Thinkest thou, Fleeas? . . .

FLEEAS

Everywhere
I feel the bitter winds of her desire.

FIONAVAR

The dead are ever near. . . .

FLEEAS

Nay, they are pent
In the bodiless aether, as the fire
Is prisoned in the opal . . . what strange event
Has changed thy fierce soul to a timid dove
Trembling with fear?

FIONAVAR

How can I be brave?
Great fear is hidden in the heart of love.
Surely some evil has befallen Maeve.

FLEEAS

She dreamed, doubtless, she saw a radiant sight.
Should there be any terror in these things?

FIONAVAR

Yea, there is terror in the haunted night,
And fear for every spirit with frail wings,
Breasting a storm.

FLEEAS

She is strong to stand
Against all the storms of all the worlds that toil
About the heavens, and even in faery land
The grass grows greener when she treads the soil.
She spreads her wings to every wind that blows,
Beyond the tempest seeking the calm goal
Of her desire, the peace her spirit knows
In dreams, the waveless harbour of the soul.

FIONAVAR

How many a weak ship with mighty sails
Driven before the wind, founders at last
Amongst the reefs and shoals—What dream avails
To quench the lightning or hold the storm fast? . . .

FLEEAS

Yet, throned above all these, the gods are kind,
And great sails bear a little vessel far—
Blessed are they that trust the homeless wind.

[MAEVE *comes in. Her face is pale and her eyes luminous.*

MAEVE

I have come down from the hill, Fionavar—
Fleeas, thy good words smite me to the heart,
I have found no kingdom, but a grievous war.

FLEEAS

Oh Maeve, the host are ready to depart.

MAEVE

Didst thou not say they follow me no more?

FLEEAS

They will do thy will without murmuring,
Save Fergus only!

MAEVE

It is very well:
I would go forth against the Red Branch King,
I think it is not Fergus who will rebel
Against this deed.

FLEEAS

The King Ailill [1]
Sends messengers, he waits thee at Cruhane.
He fears for thy safety on the faery hill,
He is old, he would look on thy face again
Once ere he dies.

[1] Ailill was Maeve's husband, who is said to have fought in her army at times, but often remained in Connaught when she went out to battle.

MAEVE

He whines his life away,
He is not old, it is not he who will die.
Fleeas, true friend, as soon as it is day
We will hold a council; the midnight sky,
With its mysterious stars and cloudy fires,
Is but an ill deviser of sharp schemes
To rule the world, and this long watching tires
The soul that sees the beckoning hands of dreams
Wave through the starlight—go thou to thy rest.

FLEEAS

My rest is in thy love.

MAEVE

Then hast thou found peace.

FLEEAS

May all the secret ways of sleep be blest
To thee, oh Queen, and daylight sorrows cease.

[FLEEAS *goes out.*

FIONAVAR

Oh Mother, what didst thou see on the hill,
Why dost thou follow hotly this new strife?

MAEVE

I saw lost dreams and a defeated will,
I saw the ivory shut gates of life.

FIONAVAR

Yet why wilt thou go forth against the Lord
Of Ulla, thou who art weary of war?

MAEVE

Deirdre must be avenged. . . .

FIONAVAR

Can any sword
Avenge Deirdre?

MAEVE

Yea, the sword evermore
Must answer treachery. My lips would scorn
To speak the traitor's name, yet this sharp blade
Shall know his heart. . . .

FIONAVAR

Oh Mother, thou wert born
Under a fierce star, I am almost afraid
Of thy wild words. . . .

MAEVE

Think well ere thou goest forth
With me to battle, this is no child's play;
There are many mighty heroes in the North.

FIONAVAR

I dreamed that thou didst see Deirdre
Among the Danaan people, is it not so?

MAEVE

She would not open the ivory gate.

FIONAVAR

She will open to thee the gates of woe,
She it is who has brought thee to this fate.
Alas, she has brought much sorrow on the earth.

MAEVE

All great souls bring great sorrow: in past years
There was a woman of Danaan birth
Who brought grief to faery land, and many tears.

[NERA *passes outside singing.*

SONG

In a dream of opal and cloudy blue,
The starlight gives rainbow wings to the wind;
The stars toss their flaming crowns to the dew—
Silent, oh Queen, is the dew on the grass. . . .
Behold, I have given my dreams to the blind,
And my shining songs to the shadows that pass
Dumb as the dewdrops and deaf as the wind.

The moonlight has given a soul to the sky
With white rays into the darkness shed;
But the voice of the wind is a bitter cry,
Listen, oh Queen, to the voice of the wind. . . .
My harp is broken, the music has fled,
Behold, I have given my dreams to the blind,
Behold, I have given my love to the dead.

FIONAVAR

Oh Maeve, go not thou forth to do this deed.

MAEVE

What fearest thou?

FIONAVAR

There is enough blood shed,
My soul is broken like a wind-blown reed
Crushed down beneath the footsteps of the dead. . . .
I have seen Feithleen[1]—

MAEVE

Think not to frighten me,
I dream no dream of sunshine and sweet flowers,
I have talked with the ever-blessed Sidhe,
I have seen many sorrows and dark hours.

[1] Feithleen was a mysterious prophetess of the people of Connaught.

FIONAVAR

Like little flames of fire, short tufts of hair
Waved round her brow and many times she cried
To me, she said there was blood everywhere
About the host.

MAEVE

Doubtless she prophesied
The fall of Ulla, the death of Conchobar.

FIONAVAR

Her face was white and hollow like a ghost,
As she stood beside me on the chariot bar;
She pointed with wild hands towards the host
And babbled of blood and many griefs to come;
Red everywhere, blood red. I have never seen
So much bloodshed; lo, Queen, I was stricken dumb
With terror, I fear greatly for the end,
I fear for all our lives.

MAEVE

I that am Queen
Have seen much blood shed, and many a friend
Fall dead at my feet, I have no fear.
Think thou no more of all these childish tales,
Take courage.

FIONAVAR

Oh Mother, thy life is dear
To me, I am not brave, no courage avails
To bring the dead to life.

MAEVE

Foolishness
And empty terrors are these dreams of thine.

FIONAVAR

Seest thou not how, lit by the fiery stress
Of love, lights in the darkness shine
Of the time to come. . . .

MAEVE

Who stands on the threshold?

[FERGUS *comes in.*

FERGUS

I have been the rounds, all's well, be not afraid.

MAEVE

Come hither, friend, I promised thee of old
A goodly gift, a sword with a sharp blade.
For thy song, Fergus, take now thy reward,
Here are sharp swords to avenge Deirdre's wrong,
And in the host is many another sword.

FERGUS

This is a great gift for a little song.

MAEVE

To-morrow we go forth against Conchobar.[1]

FERGUS

Oh Queen, thy glory is as the white moon,
That shines in heaven beyond every star;
Till all the spears flash in the warrior's dūn—
And round the hero's brow burns the fierce light
Of mighty deeds.

[NERA *is heard singing outside.*

SONG

The moonlight has given a soul to the sky
With white rays into the darkness shed,
But the voice of the wind is a bitter cry—
Listen, oh Queen, to the voice of the wind. . . .

[1] Conchobar, the King of Ulla, who treacherously murdered Naisi, the lover of Deirdre and comrade of Fergus.

FERGUS

I thank thee from my heart,
Great Queen, for the promise of this moonlit night.

[*He kisses her hand and goes out.* FIONAVAR *takes the torch, which has burnt low, and extinguishes it, trampling it under her feet.*

FIONAVAR

Alas, alas, the moonlight shall depart
From the world—the night is lonely and dark.

MAEVE

Nay, thou art foolish, why now dost thou weep?

FIONAVAR

The torch is dead now, and each little spark
Quenched. . . .

MAEVE

Surely thou art weary, thou hast need of sleep,
Go now and rest.

NERA (*sings outside*)

My harp is broken, the music has fled;
Behold I have given my dreams to the blind,
Behold I have given my songs to the dead,
My songs and my love and my soul to the dead.

[*The song dies away in the distance.* MAEVE *goes to the door and looks out. The room is flooded with moonlight.*

MAEVE

The world is fair as any warrior's dream,
Bathed in white moonlight luminous and clear,
Still here and there the sullen watch-fires gleam.

FIONAVAR

My heart is heavy with an unknown fear.

[*She goes over to* MAEVE. *They stand together looking out. The scene closes.*

ACT III

Scene II

Interior of a tent, through which a little stream runs. A Druidess *is crouching in the shadow gazing into the dark water. The tent is hung with magical symbols, triangles and other mathematical figures. There is a bronze lamp on a high pedestal, under it is a huge opalescent shell. A yew bough is hung over the entrance.* Maeve *flings aside the curtain and comes in. She looks fierce and haggard—in her hand is a javelin. The* Druidess *does not move or look up, but goes on crooning to herself and gazing into the stream.*

DRUIDESS

Oh, wandering water fallen from thy rest,
Among the hills in many secret streams,
What dream dost thou bear away to the West,
Where the Atlantic waits for all our dreams?

Thy creeping footsteps fill the night with sound
And silence, gliding through the windless tent,
Still as deep waters that flow underground,
Dark with the vision of a fierce event.

Like children struggling on the breast of night,
The image of the slayer and the slain
Float past in trembling waves of broken light
With running water for their battle plain.

Oh Mannanān,[1] call all thy streams to thee,
Be thy voice heard above the silvery din
Till restless rivers find the untroubled sea
And every little wave is gathered in.

[1] Mannanān was the sea-god.

MAEVE

Druidess!

DRUIDESS

What is thy will?

MAEVE

I have come here
Straight from the battle, I would know the end.

DRUIDESS

The end is peace.

MAEVE

Speak plainly, friend, no fear
Is in my soul. Plain words do but offend
The timid. What dost thou see in the stream?

DRUIDESS

A victory such as the poets sing
And the unbroken triumph of a dream.

MAEVE

I would break the pride of the Red Branch King.

DRUIDESS

Deirdre shall be avenged.

MAEVE

Is it even so?
Why dost thou tremble, Druidess, and turn pale?

DRUIDESS

I have seen another sight, a vision of woe.

MAEVE

A false dream surely; shall this great host fail?

DRUIDESS

I have seen the bearers carrying the dead.

MAEVE

All men must die; the battle hours hold
A short and painless death. . . .

DRUIDESS

Oh, so much bloodshed
Has dulled the vision. . . .

MAEVE

Thy tale is but half told,
What seest thou?

DRUIDESS

Oh Maeve, hold thou thy shield
Before the breast of her thou lovest most,
See to her safety on the battle-field.
May the kind gods who march beside the host
Protect her.

MAEVE (*with a loud cry*)

Fionavar! Fionavar!

[FIONAVAR *pushes aside the curtain and comes in.*

FIONAVAR

What wouldst thou, Maeve? I wait here for thy will.

MAEVE

Fleeas goes with me in the battle-car,
Go thou to thy tent. . . .

FIONAVAR

What have I done?

MAEVE (*speaking quickly in great agitation*)

Naught, be still. . . .

The omens are evil, go thou to thy tent.
Wait there in peace, the battle is not for thee
To-day; have pity, child, my soul is rent
With fear.

DRUIDESS

It is the will of the ever-blessed Sidhe.

[*A sudden echoing cry is heard. The* DRUIDESS *puts her ear to the shell and listens intently. The tent grows dark.*

MAEVE

Fionavar, where art thou?

FIONAVAR

At thy side. . . .

MAEVE

A cold hand touched me. . . .

FIONAVAR

Waves of chilling air

Darken the world. . . .

MAEVE

The crowding shadows glide

About us. . . .

[*There is a flash of lightning. For a moment glimmering faces are seen as of a host of spirits rushing through the tent. There is a slight earthquake shock.*

FIONAVAR (*absently gazing into the darkness*)

The faces of the gods are very fair,
The earth rocks underneath their scornful tread.

[*Through the dark tent there rushes a shining spear made of living and fluid particles of light. There is a hissing sound as of red-hot iron plunged into water, and the spear vanishes.*

A VOICE (*wailing*)

Ioldana, why hast thou hurled thy spear [1]
Into the world?

ANOTHER VOICE

The living and the dead
Have met in the crashing of a broken sphere.

FIRST VOICE

The lance should have lain among lifeless things
Made drowsy with poppies steeped in Mandragore.
[*A flight of white birds passes.*

ANOTHER VOICE

Red is the blood on thy birds' wings,
Angus!

ANOTHER VOICE

There is one here I know not.

ANOTHER VOICE (*shrieking*)

A God of War,
A new and terrible god. . . .

ANOTHER VOICE

Oh, stranger Lord,
Bid the spheres part and all this tumult cease. . . .

ANOTHER VOICE

Thy soul has come amongst us like a sword . . .
Leave us in peace—leave us in peace.
[*The thunder grows louder and louder. There is a violent earthquake shock.*

[1] The living spear of the god Ioldana had tremendous magic powers. Angus was the god of love.

FIRST VOICE

Pass on thy way, bid the struck earth be still.
What have we to do with thee, pass on thy way.

ANOTHER VOICE (*in terror*)

Thou hast put out the sun with thy wild will.

A SHRIEKING CRY

Where is the sunshine, give us back the day!

[*The earthquake shock is repeated. The tent becomes darker and darker till suddenly a little circle of light begins to grow in the midst of the blackness. Figures gradually become visible, very small and clear like a vision in a crystal ball. Three crosses stand out for a moment against a lurid sky surrounded by a confused and panic-stricken multitude, then there is another earthquake crash and everything disappears in the darkness for a short time. Crash succeeds crash and all is confusion. Then the light gradually and very dimly reappears.* FIONAVAR *is lying on the ground in a dead faint.* MAEVE *stands beside her pale and rigid.*

DRUIDESS

Oh Mannanān, call all thy streams to thee,
Be thy voice heard above their silvery din
Till restless rivers find the untroubled sea
And every little wave be lost therein.

[FIONAVAR *gradually comes to herself.*

MAEVE

The gods have given a sign—the ground shook
And sank beneath us like a sinking wave,
I have read of such things in an ancient book.

FIONAVAR (*in a voice of passionate entreaty*)

May the gods pity a tortured slave!

MAEVE

Alas! alas! my soul is full of fear
And evil boding.

DRUIDESS

Hast thou no pity then
For the death of a god? Oh Queen, the crystal sphere
Is broken and a new star gone forth. . . .

ACT IV

MAEVE'S *tent. It is growing dark.* FIONAVAR *and an* OLD WOMAN. THE OLD WOMAN *is spinning.*

FIONAVAR

Old mother, dost think they will soon return?

THE OLD WOMAN

Have patience, child, the day is not yet done.

FIONAVAR

See, in the distance, dost thou not discern
Their helmets flashing in the setting sun?

THE OLD WOMAN

'Tis but the river glittering on the plain.
Young eyes are dazzled by a dream of strife
In every stream.

FIONAVAR (*impatiently*)

I strain my eyes in vain.
This is the longest day in my whole life.

[*She paces about impatiently.* THE OLD WOMAN *spins.* *A* MESSENGER *enters the tent. He is dusty and travel-stained.*

MESSENGER

The battle is over—the Ultonians fled.
I have seen Cuculain fly before the Queen,
He saved himself by flight—now he is dead
And Ulla has fallen.

FIONAVAR

I would I had seen
The triumph of Maeve!

MESSENGER

Lady, even now
She stands victorious in her battle-car,
Lonely among the dead. Grief is on her brow—
She speaks but of thee, Princess Fionavar.

FIONAVAR

I will go forth to meet her.

THE OLD WOMAN

Nay, child, rest
A little while.

FIONAVAR

I cannot rest, my heart
Does not know peace. The sun is in the west,
I must see her ere the last gleams depart
From the world.

THE OLD WOMAN

Oh, I am old and feeble grown;
I pray thee wait awhile.

FIONAVAR

I cannot stay.

THE OLD WOMAN

Wilt thou leave me mourning here alone?

FIONAVAR

I must be with her ere the close of day.

THE OLD WOMAN

Oh wild and passionate will, ye shall not meet
Before the daylight deepens into night.

FIONAVAR

Yet will I run to find her with swift feet
Chasing the last rays of the fading light.

THE OLD WOMAN

Ah, do not go, a sharp and shuddering chill
Warns all my soul against this deed of thine.

FIONAVAR

My heart is on fire, and my mortal will
Is but a wine-cup for the spirit's wine
That overflows in deeds.

THE OLD WOMAN

Oh, rash and reckless one!
The Queen feared much for thee this battle plain.

FIONAVAR

I will be with her there ere set of sun,
The battle is over and all her fears in vain—
I go to find the sweet and shining hour
I have seen mirrored in each running stream
And in the heart of every wind-blown flower,
I go to find the glory of a dream—
The triumph of Maeve!

[*She goes out.* THE OLD WOMAN *begins to spin and sing to herself in a low voice.*

SONG

Out of the depths of the crystal spheres
To the wind-blown world a spirit came,
And from the joy of her shining years
She brought but a little waving flame.

The winds of the world blew strong to scorch
With the burning dream her crystal mind.
Alas, for the spirit that held the torch!
Alas, for a flame blown by the wind!

Alas, for the wild desire that stole
From the opal's heart the spark divine,
For the flame has burnt through her inmost soul
And cracked and blackened its crystal shrine.

MESSENGER

Does any evil thing threaten the Queen?

THE OLD WOMAN

She will find her lonely amongst the dead.

MESSENGER

That was a strange song, surely thou hast seen
A vision or dreamed some dark dream of dread.

THE OLD WOMAN

The flame has cracked and scorched its crystal shrine. . . .

MESSENGER

Cease thou thy riddles, who may understand
These twisted dreams and subtle words of thine?
Speak thou the common speech of all the land.

THE OLD WOMAN

There is no need for words, it is too late—

MESSENGER

Dost thou see anything?

THE OLD WOMAN

On the grass outside
I hear the swift foot-fall of fate,
I know that she will find what she sought.

[*Another* MESSENGER *comes in.*

SECOND MESSENGER

Where is the Princess Fionavar?

THE OLD WOMAN

She has gone forth to meet the High-Queen Maeve.

SECOND MESSENGER

The Queen drives homeward in her battle-car,
Crushing the grass where many a new-made grave
Shall soon be heaped; she bids the Princess stay
Her coming here, her soul is strangely rent
With evil dreams and bodings. Canst thou say
Where I shall find the Princess?

THE OLD WOMAN (*goes to the door and points*)

This way she went.

SECOND MESSENGER

How shall I know her, lady; by what signs?

THE OLD WOMAN

She is young and tall, like a tall meadow flower,
Delicate wristed, with a sword that shines
Guiltless of blood. Stay, in an evil hour
She bound the golden cath-barr on her head
That marks for all the world her royal birth.

SECOND MESSENGER

I would know her among the living or the dead
By the gold circle of the kings of earth.

[*He goes out.*

FIRST MESSENGER

What dost thou fear, why is thy soul downcast?

THE OLD WOMAN

She has gone out into a world of woe
At twilight.

FIRST MESSENGER

Surely all danger is past.

THE OLD WOMAN

Danger is never past while rivers flow
Down to the sea, and white spring flowers fade
In the sharp winds, while every weary year
Autumn makes barren the green forest glade,
Thinking these thoughts my heart is full of fear.

FIRST MESSENGER

These are the foolish fancies of the old,
Their dreams are ever but a craven throng
Of fears, their hearts beat slow—their blood is cold.

THE OLD WOMAN

Oh spirit of youth, thou doest the world wrong,
The sunny April world where old and new,
The aged earth and the young growing flowers,
Are lit by rainbow dreams the whole day through;
But the pale primrose haunted twilight hours,
Gazing at old unfathomable things,
Crowd round the threshold of the nearer stars
And beat the blue air with their weary wings—
Believe me, the old behind their prison bars
Have lit strange altar fires.

FIRST MESSENGER

I hear the sound
Of galloping horses.

THE OLD WOMAN

It is the Queen!
Grief is on me, I am bowed to the ground,
I would that all this sorrow had not been.

[*There is a moment's silence—then* MAEVE *comes in.*

MAEVE

Where is Fionavar?

THE OLD WOMAN

Oh great Queen, blame me not
For I am old.

MAEVE

Where is Fionavar?

THE OLD WOMAN

I know not. She fled like an arrow shot
Into the twilight, gray, without a star,
I am old and feeble, and my sight is weak.

MAEVE

Oh fool, fool, fool, why didst thou let her go?

THE OLD WOMAN

There was her dream that she went forth to seek.

MAEVE

She has found the gates of the world's woe
And flung them wide for me to enter in.
Did I not leave her young life to thy care?
Oh! she was better in the fury and din
Of battle, there is no safety anywhere.
Old woman, hast thou then no words to say?

THE OLD WOMAN

I thought I heard music.

MAEVE

Who are these
Who sing such strange songs? They pass on their way
In slow procession winding through the trees.

[THE OLD WOMAN *goes to the door and looks out.*

THE OLD WOMAN

It is the bearers carrying the dead,
A warrior lying on a golden shield.

MAEVE

Alas, the vision—there was much blood shed—
Not hers. I kept her from the battle-field,
I kept her from the sight of my sad eyes—
I could not keep her from my dreams.

[*The* DRUIDESS *comes in.*

DRUIDESS

She died
On the battle-field.

MAEVE

Oh thou most wise,
Canst thou not save her?

DRUIDESS

Nay, the dead abide.

[*A procession of warriors comes slowly into the tent, chanting. They are carrying the dead* FIONAVAR *on a long oval shield.*

LAMENT

She is rescued from days and hours, she is lost to the years
that pass,
And the broken pride of her beauty shall lie near the roots
of the grass.

In vain dost thou seek to restore her, oh Queen, she was weary of war,
Let us bear her away to the peace of the lonely and dream-trodden shore.

Far away near the haunted Rosses where the sea shrinks out of the bay,
And the world is a purple shadow from the green lands to Knocknarea,

Where the sky is above and about us and the sand crumbles under our tread,
And a rain-soft wind from the hills shall soothe the tired eyelids of the dead,

We will fold her round with our pity, we will lay her down in her grave,
Fionavar, fairest of women, the daughter of yellow-haired Maeve.

Oh Mother! how shall we remember, how shall we bear her in mind—
A spent lamp lost in the darkness or a flame that went forth on the wind.

Is she broken and silent and gone like the broken string of a lyre,
Or radiant, a child of the lightning, a spirit of music and fire?

Did she mock at the growing flowers, think scorn of the spring in her pride?
Though the guardian hills stood dreaming about her she would not abide.

The rain and the wind were her comrades, she left them, she went forth alone;
Now the rainbow's circle is broken, the dreams of the wind overthrown.

She forsook the kind hearth of the world and the sweetness
of things that are,
To build up the pride of her soul on some lonely and
perilous star.

She is hidden away from the twilight, her secret is known
to none,
She has broken her faith with the wind and the sea—she
is false to the sun.

AN OLD MAN (*on the outskirts of the crowd*)

My sight is dim—why do these idle folk
Crowd round the Queen, what evil has come to pass?—

A WARRIOR

Men say the great heart of the Princess broke
For pity of the dead lying on the grass
After the battle.

MAEVE

Ye who have borne her hither on her shield
Tell now your tale, how did this thing befall
Fionavar?

A WARRIOR

She came at evening, running to the field,
Knowing naught of battle, or sights that appal
The strongest soul unused to the ways of war.
Thou knowest her heart was ever wont to burn
For any little grief—therefore when she saw
The primroses all soaked in blood and the brown fern
Broken—Death that was servant to no gentle God,
And everywhere pale faces wild with pain—
The blood-stained daisy cried out from the sod
Unto her soul, there on the stricken plain
For very pity she fell down and died.

NERA

Should a man die for pity of those who die?
I weep for the immortals patient-eyed
And pale, fixed stars that weary of the sky.

MAEVE

Oh ye who saw her fall, ye must have heard
Her idlest whisper, her last sobbing breath.
Did ye not rescue one half-drownèd word
From the black tides and silent gulfs of death?

WARRIOR

She shrieked—a bitter cry.

MAEVE

Is there then none of you
Will tell me the words of her whose swift end
Has broken my heart? [*There is a silence.*
Unfaithful and untrue!
Are you all slaves, have I not then one friend?

FLEEAS

She flung her arms out to the blue and cried,
" Is this the triumph of Maeve? " and shrieked and fell,
And lay so still, none knew when she died.
Oh Queen, this is a grievous tale to tell!

MAEVE

Yea, and a grievous triumph. [FERGUS *comes in.*

FERGUS

Queen, I am loath to bring
Noises of battle to this quiet tent
Where all men mourn, and only the bards sing
Praises of the dead.
[MAEVE *rises to her feet and motions to the attendants, who go out one by one.*

MAEVE

What sudden event
Has brought thee here, what dark and evil fate?

FERGUS

There are strange tidings from the fortressed hills,
The captains sit in council, and they wait
Thy presence and crowning will.

MAEVE (*gazing at* FIONAVAR)

Oh, least of many ills
Is death. Child, thou wert wise beyond thy years.

FERGUS

The jealous captains wait for thee, oh Queen,
This is no time for mourning or for tears.

MAEVE (*still looking at* FIONAVAR)

I will go with thee.

FERGUS

'Twere well thou wert seen
In the camp, for men say the Queen is dead.

[MAEVE *rises slowly and goes towards the door.*

MAEVE

I come.

FERGUS

They have cast covetous eyes on the throne.

MAEVE

Alas! Alas! shall there be more blood shed?

FERGUS

Pity them not, they reap as they have sown,
The host is mourning like a troubled sea,
Speak them soft words, and bid this tumult cease.

Pass on.

[FERGUS *goes out.* MAEVE *stands for a moment near the door as if about to follow him. Suddenly she stops, drops the curtain and rushes back to where* FIONAVAR *is lying. She flings herself on her knees beside her.*

Oh, wilt thou not open the gates to me,
Fionavar, Deirdre, the gates of Peace?

ACT V

Great Hall at Rath Cruhane as in Act I. A feast is spread on gold and silver dishes, everything is prepared for MAEVE's *home-coming. The* DRUIDESS *is surrounded by a group of warriors and attendants talking eagerly.*

A WARRIOR

Men say there is a great and evil change
In the High-Queen since Fionavar died.

ANOTHER

Yet she is not old, it is very strange. . . .

ANOTHER

She stands entranced for hours, vacant eyed,
Speaking to none. It is as if a spell
Had fallen upon her, she does not hear
The voices of the world, no man can tell
Whither her soul strays. . . .

DRUIDESS

She mourns perchance
Fionavar or Ailill.

WARRIOR

Nay, men say
This is no sorrow, but a Druid trance
That dulls her sense and wraps her soul away.

For her lips murmur many a strange word
Unknown to dreams, as in the battle-song
A sudden rush of strange desire is heard
That shudders away beyond the straining throng
In a moment. . . .

DRUIDESS

It is not often in the time
Of their great victory that the stars call
To the souls of men, yet the golden chime
And thunderous procession of the spheres,
In waves of music hiding the wise dead,
Sweeps through her soul and breaks the web of years
That muffles the will, reverberant to the tread
Of Dreams. . . .

WARRIOR

Surely the Queen's heart is dead and cold,
Once she had many lovers, now no man
May please her, men say she is growing old.

DRUIDESS

She had grown old before the world began.

WARRIOR

Strange such a woman should tire of delight.

ANOTHER

Is it to-day that she divides the spoil?

ATTENDANT

As I looked out across the plain last night,
I saw great carts laden with precious things,
And heavy burdened oxen strain and toil
Along the Eastern road.

ANOTHER ATTENDANT

Doubtless she brings
Great gifts to Connaught.

ALL

Long may the Queen reign!
[*Singing is heard in the distance.*

SONG

Far away in the Curlew mountains, the fires of welcome flare,
For word has gone out through the country that Maeve has come home again.
Men tell of her glorious deeds and her victories everywhere,
And all the idle folk in the land are flocking to Rath Cruhane.

Oh, ye warriors weary of battle! here is an end of toil,
For the grey-necked crow has fled away with a flapping of bloodstained wings.
Far from the place of slaughter shall be the dividing of the spoil,
And the bards shall sing of the battles of Maeve, in the hall of the Kings.

[*Procession of Dancers, Harp Players, Druids, Druidesses and Warriors.*

[*There is a moment's hush, then* MAEVE *comes in alone. She is dressed in a long gold-embroidered robe, as in Act I., with a gold crown on her head. She moves like one in a dream but goes straight to the throne.*

Now the young tell their dreams to the old and the wise go crowned with flowers;
Weak spirits shall dwell with heroes, and be comrades of the brave,
For this is the day of all days in the world, the hour of hours,
The day of the glory of Connaught, the hour of the Triumph of Maeve.

MAEVE

I have given the captains orders to divide
The spoil, each warrior shall have his part,
All shall be done in justice, without pride
Or fear of men. . . .

FERGUS

Some folly is in her heart.

MAEVE

All souls shall share alike, and be content.

FERGUS

Great gifts befit great names and little men
Are grateful for little.

A WARRIOR

The host will be rent
With the wrath of princes.

MAEVE

What sayest thou then,
Oh Fleeas? Many who served in the ranks,
Who were not heroes or kings, yet were slain.

FLEEAS

For this justice thou shalt gain little thanks.

CHORUS OF WARRIORS

The Queen is just. . . . Long may the Queen reign.

MAEVE (*passionately*)

Let them reign who may, Fionavar
Is dead. [*She sinks down on the throne.*

ATTENDANT

Queen, there is one without,
A poor man, he says he has travelled far
To find thee.

MAEVE

Let him in, without doubt
He brings news.

[*There is a stir in the crowd and* CONAL *pushes his way into the hall.*

CONAL

A favour, Queen.

MAEVE

What is thy will?

CONAL

Do justice, Lady, between me and mine,
I am blind Conal of Knock Lane Hill.

MAEVE

Say, then, oh Conal, what is this boon of thine?

CONAL

Bid Nera, who was my brother, divide
The fields he stole—the beautiful green lands
He wrested from me when our father died.

MAEVE

Couldst thou then hold them with those poor weak hands
Of thine?

CONAL

Yea, Queen, weak hands are strong to grasp
The sword of justice, and my claim is just.

MAEVE

Have then thy justice, go thy ways, and clasp
To thy cold heart this handful of dry dust.
I know thee of old, thy brother who stole
It from thee is a dreamer, he has no need
Of land; he has much treasure in his soul.

CONAL

He is a man of avarice and greed.

MAEVE

Fergus, see thou that Conal have his share
Of the fields, I have other work to-night.

[*A* VOICE *in the hall.*

VOICE

Justice, oh Queen! Vengeance on them that dare
Deceive me, and defraud me of my right.

MAEVE

What is thy right?

WARRIOR

The love and happiness
Of the beautiful Edane, she who was my wife.

MAEVE

There is but little right in love, and less
In happiness.

WARRIOR

They have stolen away my life.

MAEVE

There is no right in life.

WARRIOR

There is the law
That gives each man his own.

MAEVE

Love is not thine,
Or joy my gift to give or to withdraw.
No law can help thee to hold fast these things.

WARRIOR

She fled away with Dary from the North.

MAEVE

In vain dost thou hope to clip the swallow's wings.
Let those who dream of summer freely forth,
Lest in their bonds they poison the deep wells of Life.

WARRIOR

I would have vengeance for my ancient name,
Disgraced and blackened by this deed that tells
My loss to the world, and mars my fair fame.

MAEVE

She has gone forth to the world, let the world deal
With her, fear not, sorrow is at her side
And the world's vengeance, sharper than the steel
Of thy fierce sword; thou shalt be satisfied!

VOICES

The Queen is just! Long may the Queen reign.

A VOICE

Justice, oh Queen! and blood for bloodshed.

MAEVE

Which of us all is there who has not slain
Another?

[*A pause. An* OLD MAN *pushes to the front.*

OLD MAN

Nay, but my son's blood is red
On the grass: shall not the slayers die?

MAEVE

I have seen pity on a blood-stained field.

OLD MAN

Men say he cried a very bitter cry.
They bore him home to me dead on his shield.

MAEVE (*earnestly*)

Oh friend, have pity on the holy dead!

OLD MAN

They have no pity, four warriors can boast
They slew my son, in secret was his blood shed—
By treachery.

MAEVE

Trouble not his ghost
With this dark folly of revenge, he knows
It is well to die, he thinks thee but a fool,
Old man, to fill the world with noise and blows
For his sake.

FERGUS

The Queen grows old, she is not fit to rule.

MAEVE

Hush! there is music—

[NERA *is heard singing outside. The great doors at the end of the hall are flung wide open as if by an invisible force, and as* NERA *advances, the Guards and Attendants fall back on all sides. He passes up the room and stands before* MAEVE.

THE WELL OF WISDOM

In the Queen's dūn a heavy curtain shuts
The sun out and the air is dark and cool,
In Tirnanogue [1] the wind-blown hazel nuts
Drop down through sunlight into a clear pool.

And knowledge dwells where the red berries are,
And wisdom among the waters cool and bright,
Wherein deep sunken many a drownèd star
Burns with a secret and unearthly light.

Not in the judgment hall shall the Queen find
Wisdom, nor on the breast of warring seas,
But in lost waters where a haunted wind
Rustles the green boughs of the hazel trees.

MAEVE

I have taken from thee, oh Nera, thy green lands,
Yet would I give thee for this song great praise.

[NERA *untwines the wreath of primroses from his harp.*

NERA

I have a gift for thee, oh Queen; my hands
Are empty now of gifts, I go my ways.

[*He lays the primrose wreath on the step of* MAEVE'S *throne and turns to go, but the people gather round him with threatening murmurs and angry gestures.*

A VOICE IN THE CROWD

This is the man who has bewitched the Queen
With words.

ANOTHER VOICE

He made a mighty and a three-fold curse
And put it on her.

[1] Tirnanogue, the country of the young, the Paradise of Irish mythology.

ANOTHER VOICE

What do such songs mean
But treason and red murder, yea, far worse
Then all these things, contempt poured on the throne
And sovereign power of Connaught.

FERGUS (*scornfully*)

Let him be,
He's but a fool.

A VOICE IN THE CROWD

Nay, not of him alone
Judge ye, but of the strife and misery
His dreams will bring on the land.

ANOTHER VOICE

Drive him forth
From Connaught.

ANOTHER VOICE

Nay, vengeance is on his brow,
He will make songs in some dūn in the North
And put a curse on us.

ANOTHER VOICE

Yea, let us slay him now.

CONAL

Oh Nera, give me back those lands of mine
Thou knowest of!

NERA

Peace, peace, hot-headed one,
Get thee back to thy cattle and thy swine.

MAEVE (*to* NERA)

This is a foolish deed that thou hast done.

NERA

'Tis the last folly and the last farewell!

CONAL

Traitor, give forth thy life for thy false tongue,
Thy life for thy treachery.

NERA

The bards shall tell
This tale in the aftertime, and songs be sung
How a man slew his brother for lean lands
And scraggy hills, spray-swept by the harsh sea.

CONAL

Were those green fields a waste of shifting sands,
Yet would I slay thee.

NERA (*drawing his sword*)

Even so, then let it be,
I will give battle unto thy desires
Oh Conal, knowing that this is the end.
Beyond the ivory gate burn starry fires
Where the spheres meet and rushing torrents blend
With peaceful waters, and each broken wave
Of melody flows on from sphere to sphere.

CONAL

Nay, thou shalt find but green grass for a grave,
Yea, in the end shall the green grass be dear
To thy proud soul.

[*They fight.* NERA *defends himself languidly, and is soon wounded and overcome.*

FERGUS

He was no fighter, yet shall he have praise
In the aftertime.

CONAL

'Twere well he were slain,
Else will he come back after many days.
Yea, surely he will bewitch the Queen again.

[MAEVE *is sitting on the throne with her head on her hands and her elbows on her knees.*

NERA

Wilt thou not lift my poor gift from the ground?
See, it is stained with blood, oh Proud Queen!

MAEVE

Nera, these magic primroses were found
In the dim wood where hazel boughs are green
Above enchanted waters.

[*She takes the primrose wreath in her hands.* NERA *watches her intently.*

Withered flowers,
Oh blood-stained primroses, ye speak unto my will
With a harsh cry, a burden of bitter hours,
Drowned in blind caverns under the dark hill
Of dreams. . . .

[*She shudders. There is a silence.*

Now has the hour struck that is the last
Of all my hours. The busy moments cease
To vex me, crowding ever thick and fast
Round my sick soul—beyond the gates of peace
I breathe the air of that wide, quiet sea
Where music has changed the rhythm of all things
To the round measure of Eternity,
And ancient time with dark and broken wings
Has sunk beneath the waves—

[*She casts aside her crown and royal robes.*

Oh, lie thou there, thou crown of life and fate,
Now is my heart for ever and ever free
As the free stars beyond the ivory gate.

For the last time these rags of royalty
Cumber the soul; now will I find the way
To Tirnanogue—the way to my own soul,
The way to the world's heart beyond night or day
Or love or hate or any golden goal
Of Empire; the inexorable doors
Yield to the passionate rhythms of the wise.
My feet are on the elemental floors,
The fierce aethereal fires dazzle mine eyes.
I did not save thee, Nera, yet will I go
With thee—

[*She winds the wreath of primroses in her hair.*

FLEEAS

Wilt thou then die with him, oh Maeve?

MAEVE

Nay, nay, fear not, I know
A better way—the hazel branches wave
And sway in the wind, and gentle voices call
From the deep shadows, voices that once I knew
Of those who stand in peace when the stars fall.
In such a place it seems that my soul grew
Out of the darkness long and long ago
At the world's edge.

NERA

Oh, I will follow thee
And greet thee where the quiet waters flow
Under green boughs.

FERGUS

Nay, Queen, this cannot be.
Hast thou forgot thy kingdom and thy throne—
And us who did thy will on the red plain of battle? A king's life is not his own.

MAEVE

It is not given unto kings to reign
For more than a little while—

A CHIEF

Dost thou not know
The royal bonds that bind thy soul to ours,
Thy people from of old?

MAEVE

Long, long ago
My soul lay deep amongst the roots of flowers;
And now my people wander o'er the hills,
The white-faced daisy and the homeless clan
Of primroses and the most loyal daffodils
Are waiting for me. Since the world began
My soul was bound with many a secret bond
Unto the intimate will of the brown soil,
That fought for beauty in green boughs beyond
The wars of men, and with long silent toil
Built up the hills and flowered in the white thorn
And faded in the twilight, and at noon
Lay in thick sunshine on the growing corn,
And mixed the gentle magic of the moon
With the soft sighing of the flowing tides,
And a dim dream of spirit faces pale
That haunt the woods.

DRUIDESS

Oh Queen, the glory of the world hides
Much grief.

MAEVE

Nay, nay, the primroses are but a vail—
A rag of beauty, hiding immortal brows
From easily daunted eyes.

[MAEVE *goes slowly down the room like one in a dream —nobody dares to stop her.*

NERA

Oh, most wise Queen,
I will greet thee again under the hazel boughs
In Tirnanogue when the hazel trees are green.

[MAEVE *does not seem to hear.*

WARRIOR

Nay, sorcerer, that thou shalt never do.

[*He stabs* NERA *as* MAEVE *goes out. A warrior rushes forward to seize the fallen crown. Others try to hold him back. Another warrior snatches up the sword of* MAEVE—*and the scene closes in confusion and wild disorder.*

I think also that life is a certain long road leading to Eleusis or Babylon, but that the boundaries of the road are palaces and temples, and the greatest of the mysteries.

MAXIMUS TYRIUS.

THE EGYPTIAN PILLAR

The soul has its Revelations, the heart its Mysteries.

THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

One thought has been my whole life through the soul of every dream,
It shines from the blue sky, it rustles in sheaves of corn,
It laughs in the waves of the sea, it shakes in the flowing stream . . .
To think one thought I was born. . . .

I know that I saw the world from a far and holy place,
And dreamed ere my life began of the deed I would do
When I had moulded the clay to the likeness of a face,
With eyes that the tears ran through.

Therefore it is that I have no choice in the world to-day,
Therefore I have no will, I am but a Blind Man led
By the secret hand and the unknown power that carved my heart out of clay,
And numbers the tears that I shed.

THE EGYPTIAN PILLAR

ROSES

When her twigs are bare
In the grim air,
And her leaves are shed,
Is the Rose dead?

Does she dream, does she sleep,
In her roots buried deep?
Does she lie at rest
With the earth on her breast?

Ah no, the Rose goes—
The spirit of the Rose
Blooms, and is fair
Elsewhere.

Behold, there is no birth
From the earth to the earth,
But the Roses, wise and dear,
Live in heaven half the year.

THE DARK VALLEY

No honey for the busy artist throng,
  No glittering texture dear unto the mind;
No shining web of many-coloured song
  Shalt thou here find.

In this dark valley shadows everywhere
  Whisper and mock at life's so radiant will;
Thus do I know the golden sun shines fair
  Behind the hill.

I bring you but a little magic shade . . .
A dream found true when one awakeneth . . .
A shadow that the sun's dear light has made
In the Valley of Death.

FREEDOM

We who are mourners make no moan
For the Body lost in the grave,
For the Soul is a shining wave
And the Body is but a stone
Dragged out in the under tow
And tossed by the waves to and fro,
And worn and tormented and cast
Back again on the rocks at last.

Ah, the body lost in the grave
Is freed from the tyrant soul,
Delivered from wind and wave,
Current and quicksand and shoal,
Freed from the cruel sea . . .
But the spirit is never free . . .
There is no truce in that war
Of the tides that clash near the shore.

Quietly under the green roof
Does the worn-out body lie,
With a shadow of strange reproof
The soul wonders it could die—
Wonders that her slave is dead,
Has no need of daily bread,
Free as dust and free as air,
With nothing in the world to bear. . . .

IMMORTALITY

Is there nothing you care for or dream to remember
When the earth crumbles off from your sharp-edgèd will?
Now through your life's last tormented December
Howls the ravenous wind round the desolate hill.

When you pass in great joy the storm-shaken portal,
Shall the welcoming Angels in unison cry:
"What flower have you brought of the spirit immortal
From the tenebrous earth to the æther-lit sky?"

Lo! this will I tell them, to their shining bowers
I bring but a light from the House of the Blind,
For earth hath great need of each one of her flowers,
Whilst last Summer's last roses have failed from my mind.

Yea, the dreams and the deeds and the sorrows of night
In the opal-cut splendour forgotten shall be,
Yet clear in my mind burns a ray of starlight,
In my soul flows immortal a wave of the sea.

My life, with its burden of toil and derision,
Is lost as the leaves of the sycamore shed.
Yet the verses' dark waters reflecting the Vision
Roll on evermore through the soul of the dead.

THE WELL AT THE WORLD'S END

Here on dark waters falls the yellow leaf,
Here many broken days and stormy hours intense,
And moments of deep passion buried gleam;
This is the Pool of Patience, Toil, and Grief,
Ah, Life, the river of song doth issue thence. . .
These things are but the waters of the stream.

THE THRONE OF OSIRIS[1]

In the roof the swallow has built her nest,
And the martins under the eaves,
And all wingèd things have a chamber of rest
In the shadow of swaying leaves.

The rabbit has dug for himself a hole,
The green worm lies at the heart of the rose,
And there is rest for the vagrant soul
Wherever the shallowest river flows.

[1] This song has been set to music by Max Mayer.

THE STREET ORATOR

At Clitheroe from the Market Square
I saw rose-lit the mountain's gleam,
I stood before the people there
And spake as in a dream.

At Oldham of the many mills
The weavers are of gentle mind;
At Haslingden one flouted me,
At Burnley all the folk were kind,

At Ashton town the rain came down,
The east wind pierced us through and through,
But over little Clitheroe
The sky was bright and blue.

At Clitheroe through the sunset hour
My soul was very far away:
I saw Ben Bulben's rose and fire
Shining afar o'er Sligo Bay.

At Clitheroe round the Market Square
The hills go up, the hills go down,
Just as they used to go about
A mountain-guarded Irish town.

Oh, I have friends in Haslingden,
And many a friend in Hyde,
But 'tis at little Clitheroe
That I would fain abide.

WOMEN'S TRADES ON THE EMBANKMENT

"Have Patience!"—The Prime Minister to the Women's Franchise Deputation, 19th May 1906.

Where the Egyptian pillar—old, so old—
With mystery fronts the open English sky,
Bearing the yoke of those who heap up gold,
The sad-eyed workers pass in silence by.

Heavily hewing wood and drawing water,
These have been patient since the world began—
Patient through centuries of toil and slaughter,
For Patience is the ultimate soul of man.

Patient with endless lords and overseers,
Since long-dead Israelites made bricks to please
A King whose heart was hardened to their tears,
What time they still besought him on their knees.

Their patience was the King's confederate,
Their weakness helped his power unaware;
In vain men pray unto the rich and great,
For only God-like spirits answer prayer.

Long has submission played a traitor's part—
Oh human soul, no patience any more
Shall break your wings and harden Pharaoh's heart,
And keep you lingering on the Red Sea shore.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Robbed and wounded, all the day
The great cause by the roadside lay.
The Rich and Mighty in their Pride
Passed by on the other side.
With smiling lips indifferent
On their way the statesmen went.
At evening in the sunset flame
Out of the mill the winders came;
She who with four great looms weaves
Found Justice fallen amongst thieves,
Stone-breakers resting from their toil
Have poured out wine and oil.
The miner hurrying from the mine
Has seen a flash of light divine,
And every tired labourer
Has given a helping hand to her.
The workman leaning on his spade,
Or the tramp resting in the shade,

The navvy who the roadway mends,
These are our comrades, these our friends—
Beggars, never yet in vain
Have we stood in wind and rain
For hours at the Factory Gate;
Never idly do we wait
In the dark and empty street,
Till the thronging shadows fleet
Gather round us; grief, despair,
Is no idle story there:
Patient faces from the loom,
Eyes dark with the whole world's gloom,
Haunted faces, sorrowful eyes,
Read the secret of the Wise,
Look the round world through and through,
Seeing naught but false or true,
Seeing in the whole world wide
But one side or the other side.
Want and hunger linger near
The Divine Fire burning clear.
The cold sleet and the bitter wind
Open the eyes of the blind.
Gracious deeds are dreamed and done
By those who seldom see the sun.
Lips grow pitiful, drawn, and pale
Where the darkness does not fail;
But one dim street lamp braves the night . . .
Yet in these souls burns a great light.
Thus from the poor we beg our bread . . .
And Justice rises from the dead. . . .

VAGRANTS

Oh, Little Human Words and delicate,
You wander through the great world up and down;
Though rich men heed fine phrases of the great,
Poor Words and wingless tramp from town to town.

He who loves Wisdom for her rich attire
Will turn her ragged children from his door,
And yet an empty chair beside the fire
Kind hearts keep for these Vagrants evermore.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

Others there were who spake with fire and art;
I stammered, breaking down beneath the weight
Of that great stone that lies upon my heart
When with one passion all my nerves vibrate.

Little I said, who had so much to say—
This is the memory that sears and stings,
My soul was fire, my thoughts were clear as day,
Yet had my soul no wings.

No matter, when that force beyond control
Sweeps on one side the cobwebs of the brain,
In broken stammers speaks the inmost soul . . .
Nor shall her passion smite the air in vain.

THE THRIFTLESS DREAMER

Psyche, the Queen, says truly the old tale,
Into the heart of life's thick darkness fell,
And she dwelt lonely in an obscure vale,
Yet waited on by Powers Invisible.

Thus Ireland many blame and many praise,
And she the while, radiant in meadows green,
And following silently her ancient ways,
Is served by hosts of delicate hands unseen.

You whom the bitter hour maketh wise,
In vain you urge on her your prosperous goal,
She has her visions in her own eyes,
She has her destinies in her own soul.

Down from her mountains still the old cart crawls
As it crawled long ago laden with turf;
There are still gaps, thank God, in all our walls,
On lonely shores still breaks the Atlantic surf.

Ye who would measure all things by a rule
And cut the holy day in busy hours,
There is one land you cannot put to school,
And therefore shall she be one of the world's powers.

On through your anxious voices' fret and jar,
The soul pursues unmoved her silent course,
You shall not shake her trust in her own star,
Her unseen legions and embattled force.

For round her, driven from this dark world, wait
Mysterious powers and unseen ministers,
And all the vailèd Angels at the Gate
Guard with their swords this thriftless dream of hers.

ON THE EMBANKMENT

The Rich, the Great, the Wise are here, the Living and the Dead,
Where the Great Towers of Westminster hold the high heavens at bay,
And the poor souls who have no hope take fame or power instead,
Whilst many an obscure wingèd one goes smiling on her way.

This I know of the poor, 'tis when the Great Hopes fail
That men have gained possession of material things;
But all the praise of all the crowds shall not prevail
To make good to a human soul the loss of her wild wings.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Down by Glencar Waterfall
There's no winter left at all.

Every little flower that blows
Cold and darkness overthrows.

Every little thrush that sings
Quells the wild air with brave wings.

Every little stream that runs
Holds the light of brighter suns.

But where men in office sit
Winter holds the human wit.

In the dark and dreary town
Summer's green is trampled down.

Frozen, frozen everywhere
Are the springs of thought and prayer.

Rise with us and let us go
To where the living waters flow.

Oh, whatever men may say
Ours is the wide and open way.

Oh, whatever men may dream
We have the blue air and the stream.

Men have got their towers and walls,
We have cliffs and waterfalls.

Oh, whatever men may do
Ours is the gold air and the blue.

Men have got their pomp and pride—
All the green world is on our side.

HAVE PITY

Because some seed, no man knows why,
Has not got the heart to grow,
I think the fountains have run dry,
The Living Water ceased to flow.

Because that such a little Tower
Is built with so much strain and toil,
I think there's but a feeble power
Hiding behind the broken soil.

Under the blue and beaming sky
I watched a white bud fading brown,
The lost and folded mystery
Unborn unto the dust go down.

Unto the weak all weak things cried,
And pity in the human breast—
Ah, break not the hedge-sparrow's pride
Nor rob the blue eggs from her nest.

All the world's weak and shackled will
Would fain bring every seed to bear—
Spare thou the Primrose on the Hill,
The frail wind-shaken Tower spare.

COMRADES

Men who are born to die, whose dreams are soiled by the dust,
Are yet most dear to their friends, and gentle lovers and kind;
But only the gods in heaven are true enough to be just.
Alas that Justice dwells not in any human mind.

That star that fell from heaven, dethroned and lost long ago,
Thou shalt not find it hidden in the wisdom of the wise,
Thou shalt not see it glimmer in the deep heart of a foe,
And hardly shall it shine on thee from any comrade's eyes.

We who have followed the same star and fought for the same dream,
Are bound together for ever by the wild deed's bond and power.
Behold we have cast our nets into the same dark stream,
We have climbed the same sheer cliff to seek the same blue flower.

ON THE CLIFF

(AT DUNRAVEN)

WHERE the waves in a moaning throng
From darkness to darkness glide,
And the everlasting song
Is chanted by wind and tide,

In the wood on the cliff's face
The gentle primroses flower,
And by the sun and the wind's grace
The daffodils have their hour. . . .

All round me the tides moan—
And my soul, to battle hurled,
Is wounded and overthrown
In the wars of the dark world.

But ever at evening,
Through the great tide's ebb and flow,
And the waves' moan and the spray's sting,
Out of the world I go.

To the soul's secret place,
Where in the golden air,
By the sun and the wind's grace,
The primroses grow fair,

There to that flower-lit hill,
Whither all joy has fled,
By the sun and the wind's will,
Come the holy dead.

Broken beauty, quenchèd light,
Soul of truth, out-faced, denied,
Violets blue and snowdrops white
Grow on that lost hill-side.

THE FLAMING SWORD

Oh, softly falls the shining leaf,
There is no beauty without grief,
And all our loving is one long regret,
Seeing in the pageant of the sunset
But shadows of those pure mysterious skies
That hid the secret of the white sunrise.

Harsh streams of cold forgetfulness,
Far from the great tide's strain and stress,
Silver at dawn, and when the day is done
Gliding through the fires of the red sun—
Shadows are these of that sharp flaming sword
That hides from us the garden of the Lord.

The Hidden Eden in our dreams
Beyond the shining barrier gleams,
Thither it is that all our loves do go,
There between the tide's ebb and the tide's flow
With silent footsteps doth the spirit glide,
Amongst her secret comrades to abide.

Alas, the great sword flaming red
Between the living and the dead;
Those who yet sojourn from eve till morn
With the newly dead and the pale unborn,
At noon with dazzled eyes disconsolate
Stand weeping by the barred and dreadful gate.

For all our heavy sorrows sink
Deep down beneath the thoughts we think;
Thus can no comfortable sayings cure
Grief for the separate, dead, obscure.

One flash of secret Light may the gods give
To all who in the wilderness must live.

Lord of the sunset's flash and shine,
Lord of the hard dividing line
Between thy stars and our so barren heath,
Till thou has thrust thy sword back in its sheath,
Till we can wholly know, or quite forget,
Still all our love must be one long regret.

THE VISIONARY

"Constant use of will power extends the sphere of its action."
ELIPHAS LEVI.

DEAR life has cast me forth from her gay throng;
Unto her pipings I could never dance,
Nor learn the music of her simplest song—
I was a traitor to her brave romance.

A traitor to her flag of gold and blue
I sought for wisdom silently apart,
What was there left for such an one to do,
But trust the stranger voices in her heart?

He who would search the silence dwells alone.
From far-off towers in the inner air
Floats down the sudden cry of the Unknown,
The lonely Eastern Voice that calls to prayer.

I dream a dream of comrades, but not here—
Of fellowship, not now, that life denies.
These songs that I in truth alone hold dear
When I am dead shall fall under strange eyes.

And some brave spirit, smiling and serene,
Where I trod blindly, choked with dust, shall say:
"She sought her whole life through the Light Unseen;
Stumbling and lost she still held on her way."

Ah, gentle comrade of the coming time,
For you there is no danger in that road;
Casting aside the broken staffs of rhyme,
You enter easily the gods' abode.

From that rash mountainous and sheer ascent
You gaze down on the weakness of the will,
The darkness of the feeble lost intent,
The blind soul groping on the perilous hill.

You shall not scorn dark seas or wind-swept caves,
You Dweller on the Rainbow Towers of Light,
While through your being thrills in stormy waves
The call of the Abyss unto the Height.

Few flowers but fair on the high mountains grow—
Whilst to the Rich belongs the sunny day,
And Wise men walk where living waters flow,
The Poor are the best comrades either way.

You shall not scorn the feeble voice that cries
In the world's wilderness . . . for his reward
The rough-voiced pioneer whom men despise
Doth yet prepare the way for a new Lord.

With toil one groped along the path you tread,
Your gay robe shining in the sun and wind,
Yet shall the Living join hands with the Dead,
The Seer find a Comrade in the Blind.

So might one boast: " Lo, I have climbed the crest
Of the high hill and stood on that sheer peak
Whereon the golden eagle builds her nest"—
This is the giant labour of the weak.

The Mighty Spirit of the secret place,
The little coward soul afraid to climb,
Shall meet upon the mountains face to face,
As Moses met with God in the old time.

In Light you pass unto your star-lit goal,
  Yet my harsh purposes and baffled feet
And little foolish songs cry to your soul,
  And surely in the end we two shall meet.

THE PASSAGE OF THE STAR

"Since thou knowest, pass on, O Osiris."—*Book of the Dead.*

Outside the door that leads into the Hall of Double Maati, the Palace of Justice and Truth, where "the soul is separated from every sin which he hath done and may behold the faces of the gods." Here wait the dead Kings of Upper and Lower Egypt amid a great throng of souls who must pass the ordeal of Knowledge before they can gain the true life of Osiris.

VOICES IN THE PYRAMID

Round Heaven's Gate the gods have set no guard,
  Nor round the pathway of the Wingèd Sun.
Unto the Just no door is ever barred,
  Nor shrine of Amen Ra the Hidden One.

Ye who would put your shining dreams to proof,
  Ye who have lost your kinship with the ground,
Beneath the gleaming Lintel in the Roof,
  Your way lies open to the Life Profound.

Lo, king and peasant beg the Key of Life
  From Sekhet. All men born would pass the gate
That leads beyond rough ecstasies of strife
  To the far meadows of the Discarnate.

Safe doth the key lie on the goddess' knees,
  No stranger treadeth down the growing wheat,
The cold hands of the Inner Mysteries
  Guard all our meadows from barbarian feet.

The open secret of the Mystic Door
Deep in the passage of the star lies hid;
Oh, Amen Ra be praised for evermore,
Thou lonely Dweller in the Pyramid.

[*A* DEAD PHARAOH *comes forward out of the darkness, and tries to pass the Hidden Lintel.*

THE DEAD PHARAOH

Strange, whilst I lived I had both wine and oil
And the year's spoil of corn well harvested,
But now I have naught but wanderings and much toil;
All doors are shut to me now I am dead.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE THRESHOLD

Speak thou my name.

THE EARTH SPIRITS

Lo, this is that dark hour
That leads each mighty soul to his reward.

THE DEAD PHARAOH

Behold, oh hidden gate, thy name is Power,
Thou art the Pathway of the Flaming Sword.

VOICES OF DEAD KINGS IN THE PYRAMID

An answer from the clay that fears the fire . . .
An answer from the dust that dreads the wind . . .
Oh thou lost music of a broken lyre,
Dear art thou to the exile's heavy mind. . . .

[THE DEAD PHARAOH *is surrounded by a throng of ghostly Kings. An* OLD WOMAN, *bearing a heavy jar of water on her shoulders, comes slowly down the passage, and stands before the Hidden Lintel.*

THE LEFT LINTEL OF THE DOOR

Speak thou my name.

SPIRITS OF THE WATER

I hold the light's lost rays
As the cold dewdrop holds the mirrored flame,
The stars shine on the Burden of many days.

THE OLD WOMAN

The Lamp lit in the Window is thy name.

THE RIGHT LINTEL OF THE DOOR

My name, tell me my name.

SPIRITS OF THE AIR

This was the smile
Of Isis and the circle of her eyes,
And starlight on green waters of the Nile
Lighting the homeward journey of the Wise.

THE OLD WOMAN

Thou art the Light of Light in darkness spilt,
The strange divided glory of the sun,
The Rainbow's Arch of the seven colours built,
The way of the Many unto the One.

[THE OLD WOMAN *draws nearer. Light shines from the Hidden Lintel.*

THE CHALLENGE OF THE THRESHOLD

Tell me my name, or else thou shalt not cross
This stone.

SPIRITS OF THE FIRE

The secret of the House of Flame
Is Justice and the swing of gain and loss.

[*A long silence.*

Behold, the Weight in the Right Place, that is thy name. . . .

[*The Hidden Lintel opens to her. She passes over the threshold, and disappears into the Hall of Right and Truth.* THE DEAD PHARAOH, *surrounded by the spirits of his ancestors, moves away into the darkness, lamenting. From a very long way off the chant of the Israelites is heard. They have passed over the Red Sea in safety.*

CHORUS

Lift up your heads, oh ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. . . . Who is the King of Glory? . . .

MAN AND WOMAN

WHEN Solomon of old
  Shewed all his stuffs of silver sheen
And walls inlaid with gold
  To Sheba's Queen,
Her very spirit sank in her,
  Such treasure of white ivory
And crystal bowls and scented fir
  And marble did she see.
And loud she praised the great King's store
  Of carven wood and flashing stone,
Where cedar was as sycamore
  Before the lion-guarded throne.
And all his words were very wise,
  And his great temple passing fair,
And humble were her soft replies,
  Treading his ivory stair.
But when she came to her own place
  She smiled to think of him,
And all the glory and the grace
  Of his wise words grew dim.

Behold she sent a slave
With gifts unto the King.
She bade her goldsmiths cut and grave
For him an agate ring.
"This too will pass"—the Queen's reply
From her dark jewel shone.
Thus did she answer with a sigh
The wise King Solomon.

RETROSPECT

When I was young the world looked old
And all the mountains hard and gray,
I shivered in the winter's cold;
The very sunshine was not gay
When I was young.

When I was old the world seemed young;
On primroses the spherèd dew
Shone with a sudden radiance flung
From miles of gold and miles of blue
When I was old.

I feared the world when I was young,
I loved the world when I was old;
But now in vain her songs are sung,
Her strangest stories leave me cold
As tales twice told.

Now I am dead the vernal earth
Seems very small and very far,
And every soul in death or birth
Too great for such a narrow star
Now I am dead.

For broken is the golden bowl,
And old and young are reconciled,
All things are frailer than the soul,
And life seems but a faery child
Now I am dead.

THE SORROWFUL PRINCESS

" Whenever the elementary body is at rest, asleep, or unconscious, the sidereal body is awake and active. . . . There are some . . . whose souls are so exalted that they can approach the highest spiritual spheres at a time when their bodies are asleep. . . . The greatest mysteries are thus laid open to the perception . . . and we may be enabled to see the Mysteria Dei . . . and such things have happened not only to Christians, but also to the heathens, to Jews, Saracens, Mamelukes, Persians and Egyptians."

PARACELSUS.

" The limits of the soul thou shalt not discover though thou shouldst journey on every path."

HERACLITUS.

PERSONS

St George of Cappadocia
King of Egypt
Cleanthes, Sabra's *Greek lover*
Nekhtu Amen, *Priest of Osiris*
Sabra, *Princess of Egypt*
Priestess of Isis
Maidens
Country People
Chorus Leader

Scene. *A wood in Egypt before the Shrine of Isis.*

The Litany to Osiris is from *The Book of the Dead* (translation: E. Wallis-Budge).

THE SORROWFUL PRINCESS

ACT I

A wood in Egypt. The Shrine of Isis is in the front on the left side of the stage. On the right there is a tree sacred to Osiris. In the background on the left is another great tree, on the right, a hut. A winged sun is over the door, the PRIESTESS OF ISIS *stands on the threshold gazing into her magic mirror. A procession of country people carrying great red blossoms comes, and they kneel before the shrine.*

SONG OF THE COUNTRY PEOPLE

Help us, thou lonely Dweller in the Wood,
Whose subtle fingers moving fast disturb
The magic roots of every healing herb,
In every poison plant the Secret Good
Hid at the heart of Ill
Comes forth and blossoms at thy potent will.

We bring to thee a crimson poison flower
That flaunts above red barley and white grain,
And stains all Egypt in the dragon's power,
Watered with blood of men and women slain
By him, the monster vile
That riseth with the flood of the broad Nile.

Oh, by our mournful sighing and dread woe,
And fields all scorched and burnt and desolate,
The Holy River that with blood doth flow,
And all the flaring stars that mock our fate,
Find thou some balm to shed
On those poor souls who mourn the newly dead.

Priestess of Isis, pale and patient-eyed,
Dwelling in peace under her cold green trees,
Thou who dost read the stars' unfathomed pride,
Hast thou no pity on such woes as these?
To Mother Isis cry,
For those of us who are about to die.

We lay the poison flowers before thy shrine
Knowing thy power over all living things,
Thou from the hard earth wrestest bread and wine
And teachest the Brown Bird the song she sings:
O Mother Isis, shalt thou not distil
A draught of sweetness from this root of ill? . . .

A COUNTRY WOMAN

You who know all things, Dweller in the Wood,
Help us or else we die.

ANOTHER

My child is slain,
The little joyful one that played all day
In the bulrushes near the river's edge.

A MAN

The dreadful snake that rose out of the slime,
Breathed once its blasting venomous flames of fire
On the white flower of my belovèd's face,
And turned the Lotus petals into stone.

A GIRL

No man dare reap the harvest in the fields,
At sunset toiling was my mother slain.

A MAN

Yea, the dread snake has eaten all our years,
Seed time and harvest and the storèd corn;
Famine and blight and hunger rule the land.

A YOUNG MAN

My father was cup-bearer to the King,
Dwelling in safety behind palace walls,
Yet did he love his children, and at night
Would steal out from the long slow-waning feast
In the star-guarded palace on the hill
To visit us, alas! on that dark road
The dragon slew him.

A WOMAN (*wailing*)

Ah! the snake has slain
All those I love.

AN OLD MAN

Yea, all our crops are dead,
For the great blight and poison of foul breath
Has burned and shrivelled the land.

A WOMAN

There is none
To help us, only thou who fearest not
And art wise, oh thou Dweller in the Wood.

PRIESTESS

What does the King?

A WOMAN

He hears our prayers,
And boasts and fears and flatters on his throne,
Whilst the months pass and the fierce snake grows fat
With all the lives and harvests of the poor.

[*There is a sound of voices and laughter in the distance, and a golden ball is flung out of the wood and falls at the feet of the* PRIESTESS OF ISIS—*she takes the golden ball and gives it to the young woman.*

PRIESTESS

Take thou this golden ball and go thy ways
Unto thine own house where the child was slain,
Lay it among the reeds at the stream's edge
Under the sycamores and wait thou there
The wise one whom our Mother Isis sends;
All ye who mourn, seek ye the riverside
And tell your bitter news to her who comes
For your deliverance—forgetting not the while,
Oh sorrowful ones, the alms and tribute due
To Isis.

[*The country people come forward talking together. The* PRIESTESS *still stands near the door of her hut.*

A WOMAN

Alas! I dreamt that she would save the land.

ANOTHER

So small a thing to take a golden ball
Down to the water's edge and wait for her.

A MAN

And not forget the Temple's dues and alms.

A WOMAN

These people think of nothing but their dues.

A MAN

How can a ball help us? 'Tis but a toy
For children.

A YOUNG WOMAN

Alas, there is no child . . .
No child of mine to play in the dark house
Under the sycamores.

[*They go out as the* PRINCESS SABRA *comes in running to look for her ball.*

SABRA

Oh, wise and holy Dweller in the Wood,
Thou who seest all things in the magic glass . . .
Old Mother, where is now my golden ball?

PRIESTESS

It lies among the reeds at the stream's edge
Under the sycamores, near the dwelling place
Of Anu.

SABRA (*looking for her ball*)

Art thou sure, how canst thou tell?
Thy magic wood has swallowed all my joy,
The ball we tossed from hand to eager hand,
The ball that flashed like sunlight through green leaves,
And now thou bid'st me seek it far away—
How can it lie so far from where it fell?
Now all the summer hours pass away
Like wind-blown clouds, while I still search in vain
And your black wood has hidden my delight—
Yet will I call the others—we will seek
Down at the water's edge among the reeds.

PRIESTESS

If thou wouldst find it thou must go alone.

SABRA

Alone I go, oh thou mysterious one,
And Isis be my guide.

[SABRA *goes out.* ST GEORGE *comes in surrounded by the* PRINCESS'S MAIDENS. *They crowd round him, chattering.*

FIRST MAIDEN

Who art thou wandering in this holy wood?

ST GEORGE

I am a stranger from a distant land,
St George of Cappadocia.

SECOND MAIDEN

Stay with us,
Dear stranger, thou shalt dance and play and sing
With the King's daughter under magic boughs.

ST GEORGE

Alas, I seek a battle; your soft ways
And languid sweet princesses are but toys
Fit for the weak and idle, not for me.

THIRD MAIDEN

Great battles shall be thine . . .

ANOTHER

And gentle hours
Of sunshine and bright dreams and fair green boughs
And rivers in the moonlight. . . .

FOURTH MAIDEN

In your land
With the harsh name is every man unkind,
And none the comrades of the gay and wise? . . .

ST GEORGE

I would not be unkind. . . .

FIRST MAIDEN

Oh, stay with us
In our dear garden but a little while.

THIRD MAIDEN

You must be a great hero; we would hear
A tale of fair adventures. . . .

SECOND MAIDEN

See, his sword
Gleams in the sunlight flashing out sharp rays. . . .

FOURTH MAIDEN

Tell us of battles with fierce warriors, ten to one,
Or giants in some cloudy castle high,
Or demons rising from a burning lake.

ST GEORGE

I came to slay a dragon . . .

ALL (*startled*)

Oh, a dragon! . . .

FIRST MAIDEN

Dear stranger, stay with us a little while.

SECOND MAIDEN

And pluck the golden apples from green boughs—

THIRD MAIDEN

And tell us tales of all thy glorious deeds.

ST GEORGE

Nay, if I stayed with you I could not slay
The Dragon. . . .
Lo, I have journeyed here from a far land;
I follow but an ancient prophecy,
Seeking a very mournful pale princess
Whose destiny is written in the stars,
Bound up with all the sorrows of the world.

FIRST MAIDEN (*shaking her head*)

That is not our beautiful Sabra. . . .

SECOND MAIDEN

Ah no, she is very gay and wise.

THIRD MAIDEN

And her hair shines in the sunlight. . . .

FOURTH MAIDEN

Do not leave us, St George.

FIRST MAIDEN

Come and help us to find our golden ball.

ST GEORGE

Alas my princess is not here—farewell, kind friends,
Farewell.

[ST GEORGE *goes out. The* MAIDENS *look for their ball among the bushes and go out in the opposite direction—talking as they go.*

FIRST MAIDEN

He will not find his sorrowful pale princess
In Egypt.

SECOND MAIDEN

He is one of those who make long journeys.

THIRD MAIDEN

He dreams much of glorious deeds.

FOURTH MAIDEN

He will not help us to find the golden ball.

FIRST MAIDEN

Didst thou search well the thicket on the hill?

[*The* PRIESTESS *stands at the door of the hut looking out.* SABRA *comes in empty-handed and very sad.*

PRIESTESS

Oh Princess Sabra, where is your gold ball?

SABRA

Alas! the ball is naught—I gave it her,
The woman waiting for me in the reeds
By the water's edge, alas! for I have seen
Sorrow and hunger and death and bitter tears.

PRIESTESS

All these things have the gods laid on thee . . .

SABRA

On me?

PRIESTESS

On thee, oh Princess, for they who have seen sorrow have the heart to feel hunger, and the soul to know death, and the eyes to weep.

SABRA

Oh why should these things be?

PRIESTESS

There was a man here now who called himself
Slayer of Dragons—little is done by the sword—
But thou, oh Princess, art called to a hard deed.

SABRA

Thy words are strange—I know not of this deed,
My soul is troubled, surely I would gaze
In the magic glass and read the inner will
Of Isis and the meaning of these things . . .

[SABRA *looks in the magic mirror.—Says with sudden horror.*

Who are these who draw lots for their lives?
My comrades, yea, and I myself am one.
Alas! I dare not look . . .

PRIESTESS

Nay, fear is vain
And childish: what seest thou in the deeps?

SABRA

I see great pain and anguish in all hearts,
Yet do I know they have no cause for fear;
She that is me hath won the prize, she holds
The little scroll shut tightly in her hands. . . .
"Moritura, moritura . . ." the mournful eyes
Of dark Osiris gaze into my soul;
Is death so terrible? . . . It is not they
Who will die. . . .

[CLEANTHES *comes in, reading from a scroll; he is followed by the* MAIDENS.

CLEANTHES

Alas, alas, oh Priestess of Isis! a terrible doom has come upon us; even now has the King's proclamation gone forth. Nekhtu Amen, the Priest of Osiris, hath declared that the gods are very wroth, and therefore do they allow the Dragon to lay waste the land. There is naught that will appease them save the death of one who is innocent of all ill—one of those who tossed the golden ball to and fro under the sycamores. Therefore lots are to be drawn by the Princess's maidens, and she on whom the lot falls must die by the power of the Dragon . . . save the King's daughter. Only she need not fear—she shall not take part in the drawing of lots. This is the King's command.

SECOND MAIDEN

The King is in great fear, so he would slay
Someone.

THIRD MAIDEN

Alas, alas, for the black doom and death
Of one who is innocent, oh cruel fate!

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A VERY YOUNG MAIDEN

I do not want to die—I am afraid.

ANOTHER

We are all innocent—why should we die?

ANOTHER

Only the King's daughter need not fear—

SABRA

For her there is no need to draw lots . . .

PRIESTESS

Nay, let it be as Osiris wills.

FIRST MAIDEN

My mother is very old, she has none but me
To tend her. Ah, sorrowful was the day
I came to serve the Princess.

SECOND MAIDEN

There is one
Who loves me as his life: if I am slain,
Lo, he will die of grief.

THIRD MAIDEN

We have done
No evil, why should we die to save men
From their own dreadful deeds?

SABRA

Is death so dreadful, friends, and life so fair?

A VERY YOUNG MAIDEN (*coming forward*)

Oh, Princess on thy high-set throne, no doom
Can reach thee: what knowst thou of death?

SECOND MAIDEN

Life seems not fair until one sees the face
Of death.

FOURTH MAIDEN

Yea, who amongst us is not brave
When no man threatens?

FIRST MAIDEN

It is well for thee.
Yea, only the King's daughter need not fear.

SABRA (*turning away*)

Osiris guides the soul that does not fear
Through the dark hall of death.

CLEANTHES (*coming towards her*)

Oh Sabra, hast thou then forgotten all
Our love, that thou dost follow this blind doom?

SABRA

Cleanthes, dreamest thou of joyful love
In the midst of all our grief and bitter woe?

CLEANTHES

Sabra, there is a dreadful purpose in your eyes.

SABRA

My eyes are sad because of the dark snake
That wastes the land; I mourn for all the poor.

CLEANTHES

I can see your soul in your eyes, Sabra,
You cannot deceive me with vain words.

SABRA

What do you see in my soul?

CLEANTHES

The dark will
Of suffering and death.

SABRA

Is not that will
Everywhere in the world?

CLEANTHES

But yesterday
Your soul was clear as a swift crystal stream;
Now do I see all griefs that darken the wide world
Reflected there . . .

SABRA

Cleanthes, understand,
The god has spoken in my secret soul,
Therefore the stream murmurs mystic words,
And the deep waters mirror a strange form,
And all the currents of my being surge
And hurry onward to the starlit sea.

CLEANTHES

Thou seekest death, yet have the great gods willed
That the King's daughter should not bear this doom.

SABRA

Nay, the King wills to save her whom he loves,
But the gods will otherwise.

CLEANTHES

Dark the doom
And terrible thou seekest; it is strange,
But yesterday thou wert so gay and wise,
And yesterday thou lovedst me, but now . . .

SABRA

The gods have spoken . . .

CLEANTHES

The gods have turned thy very heart to stone.

SABRA

Nay, not my heart, Cleanthes, not my heart;
Farewell, and yet again farewell.
[*She goes out.* CLEANTHES *stands for a moment thinking.*

CLEANTHES

The King will not suffer her to abide
Amid pale shadows in the underworld;
His mighty word and absolute command
Shall save her from this doom; she shall not die . . .

ACT II

Scene the same as in Act I. The KING *and* CLEANTHES.

KING

Cleanthes, all your prayers are vain, as vain
As the vain tears of an old broken King.

CLEANTHES

There's none can help her now save thou, oh King.

KING

I cannot help her, I am very old.
Remember that each one of all these girls
In deadly peril has friends and lovers—yea,
And an old father or a mother, one
Who fain would die with her . . .
One who would weep
And pray to me as thou art praying now . . .

CLEANTHES

Thus dost thou give thy daughter unto death—
Oh, shame on thee, old man!—hast thou no love
For her who is too young and gay to tread
The gloomy corridors and mystic halls
Of dark Osiris—she who but yesterday
Was playing ball under the sycamores?

KING

It is her will, Cleanthes . . . may Osiris judge
Between her and thee! . . . perchance she yet may live.

CLEANTHES

Blind not thine eyes, oh King, unto the truth,
All of her strength she gathers, and her will
Unshrinking fronts the death she draws to her;
I know it by the curved line of her chin
And the pale light of her resolvèd brow;
It is on Sabra that the lot will fall
Unless thou save her.

[*Procession of the God Osiris, led by the* PRIEST, NEKHTU AMEN *and the* PRIESTESS OF ISIS. SABRA *and her* MAIDENS *are last in the procession.*

SONG

MAIDENS

Osiris, lord of the shadows of night and the sands of the days that have run,
One of us gazes her last on the blue of the sky and the cheerful sun.

We suffer we know not why, we have dreamed of no evil and done no wrong,
Osiris, grant that she who must die shall be one of the wise and strong.

Let not the soul of a child be torn from the light of her radiant hour,
Break not, oh dark Osiris, the stalk of the delicate half-opened flower.

There is none shall have pity upon us, and the gods shall not spare us or save;
But Osiris grant that the lot of death shall fall on the true and the brave.

Let her go down to the underworld with a smile in her desolate eyes,
The sister of all who are noble of heart and the comrade of the wise.

Nay, she whom Osiris calls shall not sigh, by her not a tear shall be shed.
With a sword in her hand and a radiant will she shall go down to the dead.

Face to face with the Hidden One at last in the underworld she shall stand,
And she who dies a pitiless death shall gain pity for all the land.

LITANY TO OSIRIS

[*The* PRIEST *and* PRIESTESS *stand in the middle of the stage facing the tree sacred to Osiris. The* PRINCESS *and her* MAIDENS *stand on the right near the tree. The* KING *and* CLEANTHES *on the left. The* COUNTRY PEOPLE *group themselves in the background.*

PRIEST OF OSIRIS

Homage to thee, oh Lord of the Acacia Tree, the crown is established upon thy head; thou art the one who maketh the strength which protecteth himself, and thou dwellest in peace.

CHORUS (*all*)

Oh grant unto me a path whereon I may pass in peace, for I am just and true; I have not spoken lies wittingly, nor have I done aught with a false heart.

PRIESTESS OF ISIS

Homage to thee, oh thou who art within thy boat, thou bringest the Nile forth from his source, the Light shineth upon thy Body, and thou art the dweller in the sanctuary of Upper Egypt.

CHORUS

Oh grant unto me a path whereon I may pass in peace, for I am just and true; I have not spoken lies wittingly, nor have I done aught with a false heart.

PRIEST

Homage to thee, thou king of the North and South, O Osiris, Victorious One, Creator of the Everlasting, thou art the Lord of the Celestial world, Ruler of the Unseen and Holy River.

CHORUS

Oh grant unto me a path whereon I may pass in peace, for I am just and true; I have not spoken lies wittingly, nor have I done aught with a false heart.

ALL (*with lifted arms*)

Hail, Osiris, we are thy children.

THE PRIEST OF OSIRIS

This is the will of the great Osiris, the Living One, the Dweller in the Mountains of Sunrise, the Lord of Eternity and the Opener of the Roads, the Governor of Amentet. He who is Lord of Life hath brought death on the land and an evil and venomous monster. She who fears not death shall bring life unto Upper and Lower Egypt and the snake shall be slain. Oh Daughters of Egypt, draw lots, draw lots, that one among you may come forth among the Shining Ones to dwell under the palm trees of the Goddess Hathor.

KING (*falling on his knees with outstretched hands*)

Oh, Nekhtu Amen, have pity, must it be
That one of these should die thus innocent?

PRIESTESS

Nay, there is no deliverance without grief,
No life without many deaths, and she who dies
Forces the pity of the Lord of Life,
Her courage knocks against the closèd heart
Of the Hidden One.

KING

But if she fear? . . .

PRIESTESS

Nay, the lot falls on her who doth not fear.

CLEANTHES

Sabra, hast thou no pity? Stand aside.
Come forth from among these Maidens, thou art
The King's daughter. This doom is not for thee? . . .

SABRA

Should then the Princess shiver and turn pale,
And fly from death, while all these maidens smile
And front the darkness with heroic brows? . . .
Farewell, Cleanthes, think not thus of me.

CLEANTHES

Farewell, thou beautiful and heartless one.

SABRA

Mourn not, mourn not, I will come forth again
Amongst the living ones. Ah, vex not thou
With vain laments these holy mysteries!

[*The* MAIDENS *draw lots one by one. Each one kneels to take the lot out of the casket. She unfolds it and holds it high above her head, still kneeling. Every time a lot is drawn the* PRIEST OF OSIRIS *says*:

PRIEST

He who is Opener of the Roads and Lord of the Underworld has driven away the storm from the path of the helpless. Go thou and dwell in peace under the light of Ra, Who is the Lord of the two horizons.

[*The* PRINCESS SABRA *draws a lot; on it is written "Moritura"; she holds it above her head.*

PRIEST

Hail, thou most exalted among the stars that never fail . . . thou shalt never perish. Make her radiant, oh Osiris, who goeth forth among the Shining Ones whose soul is divine. [*The* MAIDENS *crowd round* SABRA.

FIRST MAIDEN

Oh, Princess Sabra, this shall never be.

SECOND MAIDEN

Unjust and cruel fate, alas! alas!

ANOTHER

Will no man save her from this dreadful doom?

SABRA

Mourn not; the lot has fallen on one
Who does not fear.

SONG

The lot has fallen on her,
The True and the Brave.
She is pale but she does not stir;
There is none to save.
She is strong, she doth not cry
Against the terrible doom,
She will not yield or fly,
But she sighed like one who has lost her way in the gloom.
Hermes, be thou her guide who has lost her way in the gloom.

She who is wise and fair,
Sabra the Princess stands
Feeling the dear lost air
On her face and her hands,

Knowing her sorrowful eyes
Shall behold no more
The blue and the golden skies
And the great green boughs of the oak and the broad-leaved sycamore.
Hermes, be thou her guide on the dim mysterious shore.

Sabra, thou goest thy ways
Full of courage and truth,
Hid from the sorrowful gaze
Of our rainbow-lit youth.
Thee there is none to greet
In the homes of the dead;
We hear the sound of thy feet,
But we shrink from the terrible path that thy spirit must tread.
Osiris, be thou her guide in the bitter world of the dead.

ALL (*with lifted arms*)

Hail, Osiris, we are thy children.

KING (*kneeling before the Shrine of Osiris*)

I have come, I have brought unto thee the land of the South, I have united unto thee the land of the North.

ALL

I have come, I have brought unto thee cool water from Abu wherewith thou mayest refresh thy heart.

PRIESTESS (*kneeling*)

I have come, I have brought unto thee herbs of every kind.

ALL

I have come, I have made thee cakes in the City of the Red Barley.

I have come, I have made thee ale in the City of the White Grain.

I have come, I have ploughed for thee wheat and barley in Sekhet Aaru.

KING

I have come, I have reaped it for thee therein.

ALL

I have come, I have glorified thee.

SABRA

I have come, I have given to thee thine eyes; behold all our sorrows who follow right and truth.

FIRST MAIDEN (*kneeling*)

I have come, I have given to thee thy power.

SECOND MAIDEN (*kneeling*)

I have come, I have given to thee thy terror.

THIRD MAIDEN (*kneeling*)

I have come, I have given to thee thy victory.

SABRA (*kneeling*)

I have come, I have given to thee my soul.

ALL (*kneeling*)

Hail, Osiris, we are thy children.

PRIESTESS OF ISIS

Send forth thy light upon her, oh Soul Unknown, for she is one of those who are about to enter into the hidden way, and the divine speech is in her ears.

ALL

Make thy roads glad for her and make broad thy paths, oh Osiris.

PRIEST

Hail, Thou who shinest from the Moon. Hail, Thou who shinest from the Moon. Grant that she who shall be Osiris Sabra may come forth among those multitudes which are outside and let her be established as a dweller in the heavens and let the underworld be open to her. And behold, Osiris, Osiris Sabra shall come forth by day to do whatsoever she pleaseth among the living ones.

ALL (*with lifted arms*)

Hail, Osiris, we are thy children.

PRIEST

Oh ye who are dwellers in light, grant that Osiris Sabra shall shine in the darkness.

PRIESTESS

May the company of the Gods who hide Osiris grant that Osiris Sabra shall sit upon the throne which she loveth.

PRIEST

May the Nine watchers grant that Osiris may awake and never be destroyed.

PRIESTESS

May the Gods who dwell in the land of Tuat grant justice unto Osiris Sabra in the Hall of Truth.

SONG

Let her go down to the underworld with a smile in her
desolate eyes,
The sister of all the noble of heart and the comrade of
the wise.

For she whom Osiris calls shall not sigh, by her not a tear
shall be shed;
With a sword in her hand and a radiant will she shall go
down to the dead.

Face to face with the Hidden One in the underworld
she shall stand,
And she who dies a pitiless death shall gain pity for all
the land.

Osiris, Lord of the Shadows of night and the sands of the
days that have run,
One of us gazes her last on the blue of the sky and the
cheerful sun.

[*During the song the procession is re-formed, and they all go out singing.*

ACT III

In the wood near the Shrine of Isis. The PRIESTESS *stands at the door of her hut. The* PRINCESS SABRA *is bound to the tree on the left, her arms high above her head. On her head is a wreath of roses. She seems in a sort of trance. A great sword lies on the ground at her feet.* ST GEORGE *comes in.*

ST GEORGE

I have found her at last. Yes, this is she,
My sorrowful Princess.
[SABRA *opens her eyes slowly and heavily.*

SABRA

Oh come not here
Or speak, for I am as one already dead.

ST GEORGE

Are not the dead my comrades? . . .

SABRA

Whence art thou
Who speakest lightly of the dead?

ST GEORGE

I am come
From a far distant land that I may find
A sorrowful and very pale princess
Whose destiny is written in the stars
Bound up with all the sorrows of the world.

SABRA

Behold, I am she whom thou seekest. How can the dead
help the living?

ST GEORGE

I would do
A deed beyond the power of living men,
And without thee I perish. . . . I would slay
The evil monster that lays waste the land.

SABRA

Now doth my soul that moved in alien deeps
Feel the world's sunlight flashing on her wings—
I who have roamed through the dark underworld
Have brought back to the daylight with much toil
A magic sword to slay the evil snake.
My sorrow knocked against the closèd heart
Of the Hidden One, Lord of Life and Death,
Osiris, I have seen him face to face
In the dark innermost abyss, the Hall
Of Right and Truth . . .

ST GEORGE (*kneeling*)

Ah, Lady, shall I cut
These cruel bonds?

SABRA

Nay, for no sword
Can cut the bonds that bind my captive soul
Unto this enterprise.

ST GEORGE

Oh, Sorrowful One,
Be with me in the battle, for I go
As one blindfolded, but to do a deed
That is thy dream . . .

SABRA

My strife is with strange foes,
To wrest the victory from the ruthless hands
Of unseen powers. . . . Take thou the sword; go down
To the River's edge under the sycamores;
There shalt thou find the monster, slay him there;
I see the white Nile redden with his blood—
Thou shalt deliver the land . . .
Farewell, farewell . . .

[*She relapses into a trance.* ST GEORGE *takes the sword and rises to his feet.*

ST GEORGE

A sorrowful and very pale princess
Whose destiny is written in the stars,
Bound up with all the sorrows of the world,
And dead, yea dead as she had never lived,
For a few moments speaking strange wise words;
Yet will I do thy will, Princess . . .
Farewell . . .

[ST GEORGE *goes out. One by one and very slowly the* MAIDENS *pass by, singing.*

SONG

Under the Sacred Bough
Does the Princess Sabra stand,
There is none shall save her now
Who was first in the land.
Behold, with a gentle tread
Through the valley of tears we pass,
Where the shadow of her who is dead
Grows longer towards the darkness, and waves and fails on the grass . . .
Alas for the Lonely One and the Shadow that fails on the grass.

Isis, thou Queen of the Wood,
And Osiris who dwells apart
In the Hall of Right and Good,
Ye have measured her heart,
And behold in her shining form
She shall come forth from the gloom
Out of the cloud and the storm;
Her spirit shall grow divine in the pitiless whirlwind of doom,
Lo, her soul shall never rest in the dark and sorrowful tomb.

[CLEANTHES *comes in and goes up to* SABRA.

CLEANTHES

Sabra, beautiful Sabra, I have come
To bring thee freedom . . . to cut these cruel bonds. . . .
Oh come with me, together we will go
Over the blue sunlighted happy seas
To the far land of Greece that is my home,
There will we dwell amongst the olive trees
And vineyards, with a cheerful company
Of those who laugh and labour in green fields,
And dream no evil dreams but sing glad songs
At dawn and sunset, and lay in great stores
Of wine and oil through golden harvest hours . . .
Why dost thou not answer me?
Dreamest thou
The gods will punish us? . . . an idle dream,
The threat of cowardly priests . . . the gods love most
Those who do most defy them . . .
Gracious one,
Sabra, beloved . . . dost thou hear? . . . awake,
Arise, fear nothing, thou art free . . .

[*He cuts the bonds;* SABRA *sways heavily and falls forward into his arms. He lays her gradually and gently on the ground, and kneels beside her, leaning over her. The* PRIESTESS OF ISIS *comes out of her hut.*

Alas, alas, Sabra, my beautiful Sabra, what is this? . . .
Together we will brave the utmost wrath
Of dark Osiris . . . faint not, beloved . . . speak . . .
Nay, look at me . . .

PRIESTESS OF ISIS

Fret not her soul, Cleanthes, who has gone
To dwell awhile under the sacred palms
Of the goddess Hathor . . .

CLEANTHES

Oh, she is dead . . .

PRIESTESS

Mourn not for her who has passed the Inner Gate
Of Knowledge. What knowest thou of life or death?

CLEANTHES (*furiously to the* PRIESTESS)

I know she is dead and gone from my sight . . .
Murdered by these black hosts of cruel gods
And cowardly men,—shame on your mysteries!

PRIESTESS

She has gone forth among the Shining Ones.

CLEANTHES

Oh, mock me not with these most empty tales . . .

PRIESTESS

Barbarian, dweller amongst noisy courts
Of foolish kings, what dost thou know of her
Who wanders freely in the underworld,
Who has seen Isis in the lonely wood ?

CLEANTHES

Old woman, thou who didst not cut her bonds,
But watched her die with unrelenting eyes,
Little it were to me with this sharp sword
To send thee forth unto thy cruel gods
To carry all my hatred to the throne
Of black Osiris.

PRIESTESS

Wilt thou, who dost fear
To slay the Dragon, brave the divine wrath
Of great Osiris? . . .

CLEANTHES

Him I do not fear,
Yet will not slay thee, who perchance dost know
Her hiding place in the dark underworld . . .
[*He turns to* SABRA.
Well does she keep her secret; all in vain
I gaze upon her white mysterious brow
And closely lidded eyes. . . .
Do thou, black witch,
Gaze in thy magic glass and tell me now
What doeth my belovèd . . . where is she? . . .
Read thou her secret if thou canst.

[*The* PRIESTESS *gazes for a few moments silently into the magic mirror.*

PRIESTESS

I see
The glitter of the Princess' golden hair
Outshine the glory of the Sektet boat,
The golden boat of Ra. I see her stand
Far in the deeps among the secret ones.
She has knocked at the heart of the great Hidden God
Osiris. . . . Amongst the pale bloodstained reeds

Lies the Snake, all his evil being fills
The holy air of evening with foul flames,
And there is one would slay him, in his hand
Flashes the magic sword, and at his side
Radiant the Princess stands in silver light . . .
He drinks in all the fire of her fierce will
Who sways the conflict at the water's edge . . .
Behold, she has gone forth by day amongst
The living ones. . . . Now is the battle terrible;
The Dragon rises reeking from the slime,
The evil power unfolds its coilèd might,
In vain doth the dread snake hiss forth great breaths
Of venomous flame; the waters of the Nile
Are red with blood. . . . the battle sways . . .
No foulest poison from the uttermost pit
Can blast the hero's life . . . stroke follows stroke—
Oh joy, this is the end of all our woe!
The vision of the Princess vanishes. . . .
St George has slain the Dragon. . . .

[*A great shout is heard in the distance.* SABRA *moves and opens her eyes.*

SABRA

I saw the white Nile reddened with the blood
Of the dead Dragon. . . .

CLEANTHES

Sabra!

PRIESTESS

Oh, speak not thou to her awhile—
She is still as one dead.

CLEANTHES

Nay, she lives, she lives. . . .
Sabra, dost thou remember?—it is I,
Cleanthes, whom thou lovest. . . .

SABRA (*dreamily*)

Was it thou
Who slew the Dragon? . . . nay, a stranger, one
Who came from a far country. I would rest
A little while, remembering . . . what I may . . .

CLEANTHES

Her soul still wanders in the corridors
And hidden Halls of Mystery and Truth.

SABRA

Was it thou who cut my bonds, defying thus
The gods who hold the scales of life and death? . . .

CLEANTHES

Yea, dearer art thou to me than life or death
Or treacherous Osiris, or the dreams
Of foolish men who fear all unseen things.

SABRA (*raising herself slowly*)

Cleanthes, this is a strange deed of thine,
Thou who didst fear that venomous snake,
Yet didst not dread the Powers of the Air,
The immortal gods thronèd in light and truth.

CLEANTHES

The snake slays all men, but the gods hate most
The man who fears them, doubtless him they love
Who fronts them with a fierce unshrinking will,
Nor kneels abashed before their mysteries.

SABRA (*springing to her feet*)

Thou art as I am, little before men,
Yet great with the great gods. . . . Thus thou and I,

Cleanthes, trembling much in this dark world,
Shall be the comrades of the morning star,
And of that fair and secret Company
Who fear not the veiled faces at the gate,
Knowing the hidden light of Amen Ra.

[*The* KING *comes in. The* COUNTRY PEOPLE *and* MAIDENS *come in.*

CHANT

PRIESTESS

Joy that the deed is done,
The evil thing is dead:
Princess, in the light of the sun,
Lift up thy drooping head.
Oh, holy one, low at thy feet
Do we kneel, do we kneel,
For thy life was joyful and sweet,
Yet thou didst not shrink from the cold embrace of the terrible steel.
Behold, thou wert brave to endure the cold kiss of the steel.
Under the sycamore trees,
In the silver twilight cool,
The Dragon lay at his ease
By a deep and silent pool.
To Osiris, Lord of the flame,
Vainly the stricken ones prayed
Till unto the battle came
St George, and the pale one, the Princess, the wonderful maid,
She who dwelt in the valley of tears, pale Sabra the Wonderful Maid. [ST GEORGE *comes in.*

ALL

Hail . . . Hail . . . Hail. . . .

PRIESTESS

King, this is he who slew
That evil one abhorred,
He clove the hard scales through
With a stroke of the sword.
The Dragon of venomous breath
Lies on the bulrushes slain;
Out of the terror of death
The people of Egypt, the mourners, have come forth again;
The Princess of Egypt, the
Brave One, has come forth again. . . .

[ST GEORGE *goes straight across the stage and kneels before* SABRA.

ST GEORGE

Oh mystery, Oh hidden life and will!
Thou livest, Oh Princess, yet did I see
Thy shining form among the long pale reeds
By the River . . . thou wert dead . . . thou wert dead . . .
And now thou livest, yet didst thou not stand
Among the wind-blown rushes? . . . Mystery
Of Mysteries . . . Art thou alive or dead? . . .

SABRA

I have entered into the Temple of Osiris, and I have arrayed myself in the apparel of him that is therein. I have seen the hidden things that are therein, and I have come forth by day amongst the living ones.

KING

St George of Cappadocia, thou great prince,
Thou who hast slain the monster, for this deed
Ask of me what thou wilt.

PRIEST

The country people hail thee with great shouts
As their deliverer.

PRIESTESS

Lo, thou hast saved the land.

SABRA

Yea, stay thou here and rest a little while.

KING

Together will we make great festival
For many happy days, and afterwards
Ask what thou wilt, our very lives are thine.

ST GEORGE

I may not dwell or feast with any man,
I am the world's star-guided wanderer,
Good friends, I go on a long pilgrimage,
I am under a vow . . . I dare not rest.

KING

At least then let me cheer thee on thy way
With a king's gift of mother-of-emerald.

ST GEORGE

I follow Him who wore a crown of thorns,
Therefore I ask for no gifts, but one rose
From the red crown of this deep mystery
Of grief, oh sorrowful and pale Princess
Whose destiny is written in the stars
Bound up with all the sorrows of the world,
One red rose for remembrance of this hour
Ere I go forth on my long pilgrimage
Through unknown seas to a far sunset land.

SABRA

Take thou the symbol of this mystery
From Egypt to that kingdom in the west,
And on the rough road of thy pilgrimage

May fair amid all brave adventures shine
The Red Rose of St George.

[SABRA *takes a rose out of her wreath and gives it to* ST GEORGE, *who goes out in silence. The procession is formed in front of the Shrine of Isis. During the first verse of the song all kneel except the* PRIESTESS, *who stands by the shrine.*

SONG

Oh Mother Isis, in the forest green
We knelt to thee with weeping and sharp sighs,
And thou didst flash on us thy light unseen
From the cold shadow of close-veilèd eyes.
All we to Isis kneel,
Who doth the secret of the world reveal.

Oh gentle goddess of this lonely glade,
To her who still the road of dreams doth tread,
Yet down the dark ways wandered unafraid,
Grant all the hidden wisdom of the dead.
May she, the Shining One,
Dwell in the glory of the Wingèd Sun.

Oh Thou of many dreams and sufferings,
Princess of Egypt lost in the world's gloom,
Pale pilgrim to the Temple of Dark Wings,
Thy star shines clear beyond the clouds of doom. . . .
Princess, be thou our guide
Through the far underworld so dim and wide.

[*All go out singing except the* PRIESTESS, *who waits till the end and then prostrates herself before the shrine and goes out alone on the other side of the stage.*

THE AGATE LAMP

" *The agate lamp within thy hand,*
Ah! Psyche, from those regions which
Are holy land."

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

" *C'est un phare allumé sur mille citadelles,*
Un appel de chasseurs perdus dans les grands bois."

BAUDELAIRE.

How is it doomed to end?
Shall I, when I come again,
Watch the old sun in a new eclipse,
Breathe the same air with different lips,
Think the same thoughts with a different brain,
With a new heart love the same old friend?

How shall I hold the thread?—
The brittle thread of the past,
On through the terrible maze—
The labyrinth of lost days—
A pilgrim through tireless centuries vast,
Where one dreams with the living and sleeps with the dead?

What is there that will not change
That I can recognize?
The sun, and the wind, and the April rain,
And the wild sea's shining plain—
The ancient joy in the world's young eyes—
The blue hills' dim eternal range?

Ah! there are other things
That shall not fade—
The painter's dream, the poet's thought,
The calm-browed Muse in marble wrought—
Pan's pipes out of dry reeds at twilight made—
And Orpheus' lute, and Niké's wind-blown wings.

THE AGATE LAMP

LEONARDO DA VINCI

He in his deepest mind
That inner harmony divined
That lit the soul of John,
And in the glad eyes shone
Of Dionysos, and dwelt
Where Angel Gabriel knelt
Under the dark cypress spires;
And thrilled with flameless fires
Of Secret Wisdom's rays
The Giaconda's smiling gaze;
Curving with delicate care
The pearls in Beatrice d'Esté's hair;
Hiding behind the veil
Of eyelids long and pale,
In the strange gentle vision dim
Of the unknown Christ who smiled on him.
His was no vain dream
Of the things that seem,
Of date and name.
He overcame
The Outer False with the Inner True,
And overthrew
The empty show and thin deceits of sex,
Pale nightmares of this barren world that vex
The soul of man, shaken by every breeze
Too faint to stir the silver olive trees
Or lift the Dryad's smallest straying tress
Frozen in her clear marble loveliness.
He, in curved lips and smiling eyes,
Hid the last secret's faint surprise

Of one who dies in fear and pain
And lives and knows herself again.
He, in his dreaming under the sun,
Saw change and the Unchanging One,
And built in grottos blue a shrine
To hold Reality Divine.

SANO DI PIETRO

(SIENA)

FLOATING in pale rose waves the sun has set,
Slowly on silver feet doth twilight glide
Among the hills, flooding with violet
Those marble mountains where the gods abide.
Here Sano's lingering dim Madonnas hold
The sky and all its stars and mysteries,
In their strange robes of shadowy blue and gold.
Here voices haunt the twisted olive trees
With magic whispers of a far-off goal,
Where fortune finds, beyond her turning wheel,
All light and colour in the radiant soul.
Here with the sunset's all-enfolding dream
Harsh lines and broken curves do blend and cease.
Lo the hoar olives on the mountains gleam—
The hills grow pale with that white dream of peace.
Ah, let no sob of pain, nor bitter cry,
The fragile robe of beauty rend or soil!
Slay not the smallest creature doomed to die,
The fruit of million weary years of toil.
Here, in this little city on the height,
Hatred and sorrow into shadow blend,
Deep in rose marble sinks the evening light,
And all things come to beauty at the end.
Of days to come, here might one dream awhile—
How men were gentle and had ceased to kill,
How Sano dead such years ago would smile,
To find the world grown lovely with good-will.

RODIN'S CARYATIDES

Poor weary mortal crushed beneath the weight
Of the harsh stone, with muscles strained and tense,
And limbs all wrenched and torn and dislocate,
Writhing beneath the stony load immense.

Thine is the strife and struggle of our age,
On heavy labour and hard toil intent,
The fury of fierce dreams and blinding rage,
Thou art of all weak souls the monument.

Ah, let us go to where glad peace divine,
On many an ancient sun-warmed marble gleams,
The sorrow of all pitiful deeds is thine—
Our deeds that are not sisters to our dreams.

From thee we turn to those divinely fair
And marble-soulèd Caryatides,
Who bore great walls like garlands in their hair,
And smiled beneath the carven temple-frieze.

Oh, long ago, in lost Hellenic hours,
That heavy burden did but lightly press
On the calm patient brows of austere powers,
Terrible in their unmoved loveliness.

ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS

(BY DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO)

The pale Madonna, radiant and serene,
Smiles the long summer hours in peace away,
Where the child lies on the bird-haunted green,
Nor heeds the patient folk who come to pray.

So this was Ghirlandajo, eager-eyed,
Who had not seen the hidden light in vain,
With those sad shepherds from the far hillside
He, sleepless, under the white stars had lain.

And he who smiles as he gives thanks to God,
With humble gaze serene and kindly just,
He then was that Magnificent [1] who trod
The liberties of Florence in the dust.

Nay, no dark soul of proud and evil mind
Was he who round the stiff lamb folds his arm,
A gentle labourer, most wise and kind,
No tyrant ever knew his gracious calm.

And he had listened to the Thracian's song,
And seen the gray light of Athene's eyes;
And for his joy the gracious white-limbed throng
Of laughing nymphs did from the marble rise.

The little golden daisies, silver-rayed,
Were dear to him as the great golden sun,
And he who bent before the Holy Maid
Saw in the Many glimpses of the One.

Thus be it said of him: Here was a man
Whose faith in God was very deep and wide,
Yet did he keep a little shrine for Pan
And wise Athene by his heart's wayside.

The friend of all things lovely and sincere,
This pale Madonna kneeling on her knees
Dwelt in his heart's deep twilight silver-clear,
Where white gods gleamed among the olive trees.

And all the shining forms of joy and grief,
And every broken dream of truth divine,
Were to his soul the reapèd golden sheaf
And garnered treasure of the Eternal Shrine.

Yea, this was rather one who comraded
With Plato, one who loved all visions fair;
The shepherd who the angels' warning read—
Peace upon earth and beauty everywhere.

[1] Lorenzo de' Medici.

The pale Madonna, lost to mortal things,
Still through the long-drawn silence kneels to pray,
Meanwhile the grand procession of the Kings
Comes glittering down the winding mountain way.

DAVID

(BY MICHELANGELO: IN THE BARGELLO)

This was the shepherd boy who slung the stone
And killed the giant; sunshine and the wind
Had given his harp so clear and strange a tone
That all the world forgave him when he sinned.

The gently formed and stately Greek who stood
On the Piazza, throned in classic pride,
Was not the boy who roamed through field and wood,
Fighting and singing on the bright hillside.

Swift on the mountains, swift to save or slay;
Eager and passionate, and lithe of form;
Fighting and singing, pausing but to pray
Unto his God of music and of storm.

The bare hillside and sharp rocks castellate
Rang with the clanging of his restless bow,
Where, in the dawn of the world's love and hate,
He found and would not slay his sleeping foe.

No sorrowful shadow of the evil years
Falls on this boy's face of the wood and wild;
Vanished are rage and lust and passionate tears;
The king is dead, immortal stands the child.

THE DAWN

(MICHELANGELO)

Not as Aurora of the smiling eyes
And rosy fingers doth this dawn awake;
Neither, like Aphrodite, doth she rise
From the bright waves, all silver for her sake.

Rather is she the Image in the Soul,
The beautiful young dawn of all things fair,
Who wakes in a dark world of gloom and dole,
Wrapped in the marble coldness of despair.
Thou sorrowful Dawn invincible, alone,
Pale sleeper, from thy long rest turn aside;
Four hundred years of slumber hast thou known;
Long broken is that Florentine's fierce pride
That held thee tranced through years of storm and stress;
Oh, buried in the marble calm and cold,
Wake thou, the world is full of heaviness,
And men have need of beauty, as of old.

ANGELS OF THE INCARNATION

(BOTTICELLI)

THESE are those brows no life or death has marred—
The wistful eyes and wingèd forms that guard
The fortress of our thoughts, too dim and frail
To hide from us the shadowy faces pale
Mourning outside the cloudy-pillared gate,
To some mysterious sorrow consecrate.
Sad angel faces that the Florentine
Made wistful with strange longing more divine
Than any ghastly arrow-ridden saint,
Or God Himself (whom Angelo did paint
High in the Sistine, which may God forgive)
Who shews Himself in swift gleams fugitive,
And dwelling in the world's deep heart unseen,
Shines through the thin veil of the spring's young green,
And the breaking wave, and the shadowy wind,
And the opal dream in the painter's mind.
These Angels in their pale arrested flight,
Flooding with rays of a mysterious light
The lilies in the twilight garden cool
And great stars shining in a little pool,—

Ah, shadowy angels, ye are they that weep
Beside the waters flowing still and deep
Above our dreams, hiding, since time began,
God's sunken image in the soul of man.

ATHENE (RESTORED)

Hers is the patient waiting of the wise
Who beareth all things, e'en the clownish fist
Of lumpy restorations that disguise
The delicate clear carving of the wrist.

Yet o'er her form that vacuous face, intent
Its ancient holiness to desecrate,
Casts not a shadow of disfigurement;
For beauty is no passive toy of fate.

The tireless light of her undaunted dreams,
Above all littleness of heart and brain,
Through simple curves and patient carving gleams
In a white mystery of peace and strain.

Athene triumphs, deathless and divine:
She waits her wisdom's hour, the end of all.
The eternal glory of the gracious line
Flows through the heavens, though the great stars fall.

SILENZIA

(BERNARDINO LUINI)

Deep buried dreams dwell in her laughing eyes;
She holds one finger on her lips close pressed;
Hers are no solemn phrases of the wise;
Smiling, she hides a secret in her breast.

Treasure is hers, she has great joy of it,
Nor cares that men should count her vain and gay,
No thought has power her gentle brow to knit
Or turn her red-gold hair to anxious gray.

Hers is no frown on the world's outer things
Who in the deeps of silent wisdom knows
The meaning folded in the wild bird's wings,
Wrapped in the curvèd petals of the rose.

The love of all things, in that peace unknown,
Has wrapped her round through centuries of strife;
And wisdom slowly into joy has grown,
An oft-returning guest, she smiles on life.

Faithful to earth through crowding ages past,
Her eyes, grown gentle to the things she sees,
Shrink not from the deep Quiet and the Vast:
Her lips are shut on many memories.

THE ANNUNCIATION

(LEONARDO DA VINCI)

THROUGH silver twilight, lily-laden, came
The Angel unto Mary. Everywhere
Small flowers lit the grass with gleams of flame,
Between those two, in the pale evening air.

It was the gentle hour of violet light,
The Angel smiled and sank upon his knees;
Darkly athwart the marble terrace white
Fell the chill shadow of the cypress trees.

ANGELS OF THE PASSION

(BOTTICELLI)

ARE not these they who, since the world uprose
Out of the darkness, haunt man's desolate fate,
Who knows not whence he comes or where he goes,
Or if he is the child of love or hate?

Their tirèd eyes and pitiful faces pale,
With wistful passion and long weeping spent,
Keep watch about our sorrows, and avail
To throng with mysteries the steep ascent.

The riddle of the ancient world looks out
Of their strange faces; sighing do they spoil
Man's triumphs with the shadow of their doubt,
And gently bring to nought his passionate toil.

Ah, pitiful angels, since the world began,
And from the rock flowed forth time's bitter stream,
You have brought sorrow to the soul of man,
Knowing his purpose other than his dream.

You hold the harsh nails and the crown of thorns
In trembling hands, waiting with patient eyes,
Through the long waste of many-coloured morns,
The white dawn of the eternal truth's sunrise.

THE EVERLASTING HERETIC

(A WOUNDED AMAZON; IN ROME)

In age-long silence patiently she stands,
Hiding deep in her wounded breast of stone
The secret of her lifted arms and hands
Raised by a lost dream to a deed unknown.

The world's first heretic and questioner
Of the dark instincts, this was her reward—
Red fire that burned the very heart of her—
She took the sword and perished by the sword.

The wild world went its way, since her harsh breath
Failed on the air, the wandering soul of man
Has passed from faith to faith, from death to death,
Seeking through centuries the ultimate Pan.

She, through the storm of breaking dreams, wind-built,
Has seen religions fail and empires fall,
Whilst through the ages blood in torrents spilt
Has blurred the secret writing on the wall.

She has seen temples burned and faiths recede,
Catching swift gleams athwart the glare of strife,
Through the torn rift in every world-worn creed,
Of that brave purpose buried under life.

The centuries passing on their way, consigned
The world that conquered her to dust and fire,
They are but shadows shut out of her mind:
Eternal doubter of the world's desire.

Again and yet again, through the long years,
She hears the confident clear voice of youth
Unfold the secret of all joys and fears,
Claiming a captive in the chainless Truth,

Who silently eludes the feverish grasp
And desperate glamour of that fierce embrace;
For the sad soul of man outgrows his grasp,
And dreams but soothe him for a little space.

Oh, secret of the world and far-off goal
Of that long road that life's first pilgrim trod,
Most dear art thou unto the rebel soul,
Herself grown lovelier than her dream-built God.

Surely we dream; this calm-browed Amazon,
Whose will was like a great stream at the flood,
In whose fierce eyes the light of battle shone—
Shaker of iron laws, shedder of blood—

She whose hard deeds and gentle thoughts once braved
The swords of men, and all the world's dark powers—
Now on her marble brow holds deep engraved
The secret of a nobler will than ours.

Her soul aloof from our wild wayfaring,
No more the bitter pilgrim of a day,
Has found the goal of every swallow's wing,
Her marble peace smiles on our broken clay.

Thus doth the harsh defeated beauty, spent
In the lost battle, all sweet dreams outshine—
Soul of the white force and the sheer ascent,
Wounded, implacably at peace, divine.

THE FISHERMEN

(BY HOLMAN HUNT)

THOUGH they live in a faery land
Homely people are they,
Dragging their nets o'er the sand
Of the opal and luminous bay.
There are prizes and honours to win
In the world as of old,
And they watch for a silver fin
In a sea of gold.
Those who read the signs of the skies
Make haste to crowd on sail,
And all men born who are wise
Get home before the gale.
This is the world's desire—
This is the fisherman's goal—
The lamp and the cottage fire,
And shelter and ease of soul.
Ah, but the voice in the wind
The call of the glittering wave?
Better an easy mind,
Long life, and a grassy grave!
Thus the sunset glory in vain
Rose flashes over the bay:
To the village safe in the plain
Unmoved they take their way.
Alas these fishermen so blind
May that wise God forgive,
Who hides in dreams from all mankind
The light by which they live.

DIVINA COMMEDIA

"In la sua volontade è nostra pace."—DANTE.

THESE things have passed; no more through twilight hours,
In that dark Eden of the coloured May,
On the brown river's bank among the flowers,
Countess Mathilda takes her painted way.

And little red anemones, and white
Narcissus seem to dream in vain
Of the blue sky and the sun's gentle light,
And the lost streams of the far Tuscan plain.

Now long forgotten is that wood serene
Where Lethe's moonless waters onward glide,
Bending the ragged blades of grass that lean
Forth from the green bank underneath the tide.

Noble Piccarda's pearly brows divine
Holding the secret of the world-old rune,
Like a fair jewel in a carven shrine
Trouble no more the white ways of the moon.

Long mute is Cavalcanti's broken prayer;
The smile of Beatrice, to earth denied,
Shines now no more on Saturn's golden stair;
Through no sad town shall Virgil be our guide.

Along the dark ravine, in single file,
Monks of Bologna now no longer tread
The weary mazes of the dismal aisle,
Beneath the torment of the cowls of lead.

No flaming tomb can smother down the chords
Of the new music delicately harsh,
Beyond the glint of crowns, the clash of swords,
And the lost horror of the bloodstained marsh.

For we, men say, have lost our heaven and go
Along dim valleys shadowed everywhere,
Far from the hills where, glittering, the white snow
Yet stabs with cruel knives the sunny air.

As Dante's fierce God, throned in love and light
Yet pierced the hearts of gentle folk and kind,
And drove out gracious Virgil from his sight,
And turned to bitterness the sunny wind.

We sigh where Dante sang, our hungry eyes
Grown weary of the angels' flaming wings,
Have made a rainbow heaven of tears and sighs,
And the sea's voice, and pale and sorrowful things.

We sigh where Dante sang—thus have we found
His poor lost people on that open road,
That leads through marsh and fire and broken ground
Unto the ultimate divine abode.

Piccarda triumphs in that dream of hers
That bitter grief and outrage had not slain,
The secret that the world's soul shakes and stirs,
That Dante sought through conquered stars in vain.

And Beatrice,—vanished is the shining sphere
And saints' high throne above the world apart,
Yet with us dwells the dream divine and dear
That folds in beauty every living heart.

The heaven time brings us shall not be too strait
For pale Francesca; only broken bars
Lie prone where once was hid, by the sad gate,
" The love that moved the sun and the other stars."

A love grown wide enough for Plato's dream
And Homer's story; not too cramped to hold
Those pilgrim souls, by Acheron's sad stream,
For ever shut out of the barrèd fold.

Death without glory, heaven without wings
Or angels, bright hopes overthrown,
We sigh where Dante sang, our wanderings
Have brought us to the gate of life unknown.

No heaven is ours of lights and whirling flame—
For dying warriors a starlit goal—
But a lost country called by a new name,
Deep buried in dim valleys of the soul.

A gentle land where the white singing waves
Move softly under silver twilight skies,
And life with her fierce wars and dreadful graves
Seems but a little wind that falling sighs.

No painful voice makes pitiful that wind,
All bitter dreams sleep in the quiet vale
Where, out of clashing darkness fierce and blind,
A new dawn glimmers gently, olive-pale.

The poet's laurel and the martyr's palm
Wither, the old enchantments fade and cease;
Yet still the vision of the ancient calm
Folds, round this weary world, wide wings of peace.

And all men passing down beneath the boughs
Of the dim forest to the magic sea
Mysterious, have felt against their brows
The buffet of the ancient mystery.

A drift of scattered spray, a fallen leaf,
Bear witness to that strange and unseen wind
That drives the high tide over shoal and reef
And lonely beaches of moon-haunted mind.

The light that passes, with a sudden thrill,
The moonlight's glamour and the twilight's gleam—
Waking beyond our world of good and ill
The sleeping purpose underneath the dream.

The ray of cold reality austere,
Shining beyond the gates of joy or dole,
That to the eyes of sorrow shall make clear
The hidden dweller in the darkened soul.

For whose sake Dante by the convent door,
Sure of his golden heaven at close of day,
When the monk asked what he was seeking for,
Answered but " Peace " and went upon his way.

Shrinking from dreadful creeds of storm and stress
And dreams of passionate wrath, bitter and blind,
To seek in his own soul for gentleness
And find the Divine in a comrade's mind.

As one who knew the inner unseen tide
Of beauty beating up against the walls
At evening, breaking down their coloured pride
When all things are as one, and twilight falls.

This was his grief, shut behind iron bars,
Roaming through darkened rooms in sunless towers—
His soul yet caught a glamour from the stars,
And knew the dauntless will of the wild flowers.

The captive soul of gentleness in him
Looked out through narrowed windows, passion-blurred;
Yet through the darkness of his prison dim
The far faint voices of the rain were heard.

With them he trysted outside heaven's gate
Who mould the gracious word and carve the stone,
To thrust aside one moment love and hate
And gaze into the eyes of the Unknown.

For he was one of those sad souls who wrought
Life into glory, marble into form,
And carved across the brows of human thought
The Eternal Beauty's pale and frozen storm.

Now that the sunshine has quenched all his fire
And time has swept his narrow gates apart,
We lean across the sundering ages dire
To greet the dreamer of the pitiless heart,

Knowing the Infinite Quiet, pale and vast,
Floats round his dreams, as the dark tide floats round
The loud green waves that rise and thunder past,
And sink to rest in silent seas profound.

LUCIFERA

Oh, tired of many lives and many dooms,
Breaker of waves and shedder of all tears,
Staggering beneath the weight of the world's years,
Builder of cities, hewer out of tombs,
What though thy torch, amid these ancient glooms,
Burns dimly in a flicker of hopes and fears,
Casting pale shadows on the shining spheres
From that lost verge where giant darkness looms—
Yet is the secret of all beauty thine,
Oh, mother of many sorrows! Thou art still
Witness of peace and the one light divine,
Shedder of rays, yet the dark secret will
Of troubled waters in this soul of mine,
And bright cloud shadows on the blue-lit hill.

FORM

The buried statue through the marble gleams,
Praying for freedom, an unwilling guest,
Yet flooding with the light of her strange dreams
The hard stone folded round her uncarved breast.

Founded in granite, wrapped in serpentine,
Light of all life and heart of every storm,
Doth the uncarven image, the Divine,
Deep in the heart of each man, wait for form.

THE INNER EGERIA

Once long ago in this dim wood
The Wise Nymph of the shining stream
Before the dreaming Numa stood,
Her clear voice mingled with his dream.

At Rome amongst the ilex glooms
When all the world waits for the spring,
And while the early crocus blooms,
She whispered wise words to the King.

Though Rome be far as Nineveh
From the dark road my feet must tread,
Yet do I meet her every day—
Salt on my cheek her tears are shed.

Nymph of the stream of life, she hides
In that small sacred wood apart,
Where the enchanted king abides,
And the first flowers bloom in my heart.

THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS

One was the undivided Holy Light
When those wild wills found Orpheus on the plain,
And tore apart the rhythmic limbs and white:
Thus was the music of the whole world slain,
Thus was the deed of devastation done,
And broken rays split from the wingèd sun.

Soft music lingers through sea-scented days,
And songs can harden coward hearts to war,
And streams with sweet sounds fill the wild wood ways,
And the waves chant on every broken shore;
But the lost music's secret strain and thrill
Shall break no more the heart of each green hill.

The west wind rustles through green leaves and brown,
The white clouds sail along the chanting breeze,
On the glad grass the rain comes singing down,
Piercing through green boughs of unbending trees;
And all these singers mourn the great dream fled,
The music of the world broken and dead.

Now do swift gleams and shining circles float
In each bright stream that glitters on the wind;
And ever and anon a sudden note,
Harsh in the singing, brings the dead to mind.
Lost rhythms sigh in every wind that blows,
And sleep in the curved petals of the rose.

Yea, at the twilight hour when white waves break
On silver shores under the rose-lit blue,
The world is hushed awhile for Orpheus' sake,
And the lost music of the Wise and True
Her rainbow arch across the silence flings,
And to the sun gives pale translucent wings.

Faithful are all things to that Holy One,
There is no traitor under the blue skies.
Beyond all golden dreams and deeds once done
The memory of the Eternal Beauty lies,
And buried deep beneath the grass and fern
The fires of the Eternal Beauty burn.

Thou who didst lift the mountain from the vale
With song, and drag the red rose from her root,
And o'er the secret herbs and stones prevail,
Amongst the hemlock lies thy broken lute;
Nor shall the echoes of that singing cease,
Nor any tree, nor wind, nor wave, have peace.

Children of Dionysos, ye were strong
To shatter all the tense strings of the lyre,
To break the fierce line of the embattled song,
To wreck the boat that held the Eternal Fire:
For the one Light ye gave us many gleams,
For the one Dream a host of shining dreams.

THE IMMORTAL SOUL

Pure gold did Nero's palace shine,
O'er mighty ships the Eagles soared,
Lord of the world was Constantine,
Of a lost dream was Julian lord.

The eagles passed on bloodstained wings,
Blurred is the broken marble's pride,
Yet fair amongst immortal things
Did that rejected dream abide.

The golden house has passed away,
And sunk is every fierce trireme;
The conquered dreamer men could slay,
No man could conquer the proud dream.

The trumpets, mute for many days,
Call forth no more the embattled host;
And Cæsar, in his crown of bays,
Is but a weak and wandering ghost.

Yet amongst columns overthrown
Of the white vestal temple fair,
A Pilgrim from the far unknown
Breathes here once more the golden air.

Once more in Rome she takes her rest,
Holding from the great life outcast,
Safe in a little human breast,
The august secret of the past.

Into her hands in ages gone
The great dreams of the spirit fell—
From life to life she hands them on
Inviolate, invincible.

No great thought crumbles with the hours,
No dreams decay, no gods grow old.
Though broken are the temple towers,
Shall not our hearts those shrines enfold?

We look at life with our new eyes,
The ancient spirit in us stirs,
Piercing the flimsy fresh disguise
Wrapped round that secret past of hers.

Each Soul holds all the oracles—
In a few years, to every man
Who hears her gentle voice, she tells
Life's mysteries since time began.

Like a child playing in the grass
On through the wind-blown sunny hours,
The patient ages as they pass
But fill her lap with fallen flowers.

The golden asphodel that shone
Beyond dim Hades' gate of glooms;
Great dreams of Tyre and Babylon,
And pale Egyptian lotus blooms;

Green laurels from the victor's car;
Deep Syrian roses, white and red;
And that pale scented Eastern star,
The jasmine flower that crowns the dead.

All these are hers, who, weeping strange,
Deep in the heart of hearts abides,
And all the woes of time and change
Beneath our joys and sorrows hides.

Glad is she through the centuries
With each new morning's golden air,
Beneath all beauty she is wise,
Beyond all wisdom she is fair.

Once in the brave lost dawn of time
She watched, with an exultant thrill,
The crownèd victor's chariot climb
In triumph the steep sacred hill.

Now the low wail of death and grief
She hears in every trumpet call;
She shudders, at the falling leaf,
Who saw Troy burn and Carthage fall.

To her the conqueror's battle-cry
Is as a doomèd army's moan,
She has seen thousands fail and die—
Alas, the soul grows wise alone.

Veiled watcher in the deeps unseen,
Thou ancient childlike soul of mine,
Life after life hast thou not been
The priestess of a crumbling shrine?

As vestals in a city marred
By war and famine, change and fate,
Through the long centuries could guard
The dreams of Rome inviolate:

So has she held in her long trust
The wisdom and the fire of earth;
She stands between us and the dust,
From death to death, from birth to birth.

And ever, through sunshine and cloud,
She guards the ancient holy flame,
And shares with all things fair and proud
Her radiant secret whence she came.

Hers are the dreams that once were Rome's,
No light nor flame shall she forget,
Deep in her secret catacombs
The Lord Christ's footsteps linger yet.

Older than Rome, through ages dark
She knew swift smiles and bitter tears,
And heard the singing of the lark,
Self-conscious through ten thousand years.

Strong with a strange transfigured youth
The ages cannot break her wings,
She is the witness of the truth,
The guardian of immortal things.

Scant new light on her path is shed,
She follows where the dreamers trod,
Behind the banners of the dead
Unto the temple of the God.

THE MAN WHO WOULD REMEMBER

"All of them marched into the plain of Lethe amidst dreadful heat and scorching. . . . When night came on they encamped beside the river Amalete whose waters no vessel contains. Of this water all of them must drink . . . and he who from time to time drinks forgets everything."—PLATO.

PARCHÈD and thirsty on the river bank,
In that pale meadow of the long since dead,
Amongst the waving poppy blooms he sank,
Deep in long grasses laid his weary head.

Here the dead passed, a pale and changing throng,
The king, the priest, the fighter and the knave,
The wronger and the sufferer of wrong,
The true, the false, the coward and the brave.

And many lingered by the sighing stream
And wept a little while ere they could part
With the sharp sword of wrath, or the bright dream,
Or the king's mantle folded round the heart.

Yea, even those whose sorrows craved an end
Shrank from the verge of that so dark relief,
And mourned the sad face of a dying friend
In the dim features of their fading grief.

The coward and the false, the foully slain,
The poor, forlorn, despised, shed bitter tears,
Clung to the memory of their withered pain
And folded round them all their heavy years.

As Hector parted weeping from his bride
On that dark morn when Ilium's towers fell,
So did each mourner by sad Lethe's side
Unto his own soul say a long farewell.

Though many a one in that dim resting-place
Did from a heavy burden find release,
Yet all men wept over the river's grace
Of fair oblivion and most blessèd peace.

And he who would remember with sad eyes
Watched the white stars burn forth his horoscope,
And saw his soul, in many a strange disguise,
Build up the baffled walls of light and hope.

Soft winds swayed rustling in the fringèd reeds,
And gentle voices cried " Drink, dreamer, drink,
Go forth unhindered to the life of deeds,
Deep in the stream thy heavy burden sink."

A poet passed him singing in great praise
Of fair oblivion, the Eternal's grace
To those who toil along the rough earth ways,
From life to life, finding no resting-place.

He sang of moon-lit waters rippling cool,
And how one might forget this life of pain
And drown one's burden in deep Lethe's pool,
And be a little laughing child again.

" I will lay down," he said, " Remembrance cold,
And all the store of dreams that once were mine,
And thoughts and lives and wisdoms manifold,
For the restored light of my lost youth divine.

" A child among the children of the earth,
I will go forth and laugh and weep once more,
Remembering not the woes of death and birth,
But a new soul with new worlds to explore."

Then, at his word, the ever-mourning host
Saw the white fearlessness of life-to-be
Safe in the arms of every pallid ghost,
The promise of a new youth shadow-free.

And each one, clasping close the radiant dream,
No more from the pale river's margin shrank.
Like ghostly willows bending o'er the stream
The silver shadows swayed and stooped and drank.

Then did a voice speak in the dreamer's soul:
" Drink not, behold, the tears of all men flow.
Better set out for thine appointed goal
Dry-eyed and watchful, with thy haunting woe.

" Lest thou once more should be as thou hast been,
Hold closely thy dead selves to be thy guides
To that lost treasure of the Light Unseen
That in the soul of every man abides.

" Who drinks of this dull tide must thirst again,
For him are strife and peace and death and birth,
The long monotonies of joy and pain
That bind men to the circle of the earth.

" But he who seeks beyond the waves of sleep
The star that shines above the shadow-strife,
Finds the lost stream, the well of waters deep,
That springeth upward to Eternal Life.

" His soul, deep set in the eternal mind,
A broken light in Saturn's star-strewn ring,
In blue transparent deeps of life shall find
The gulf of ages but a little thing.

" He shall be one with all men's striving, one
With every passing hour and sorrowful fate,
Whose heart through centuries of wind and sun
Is still a beggar at the ivory gate."

Then he who would remember, undismayed,
Laid down the lovely form of shining youth,
To the Eternal in the twilight prayed:
" I give my childhood for thine ageless Truth."

SONNETS

I. SUNSET NEAR THE ROSSES

Mysteriously the last hour's opal light
Doth on the glamoured sea in peace descend,
The great winds fail, and gently comes the night,
The wild swans float on sunset waters bright.
All coloured tides and fire-born rhythms blend,
Intent the veil of mystery to rend
Where secret things glide upward into sight.
Poseidon tending his white flock of sheep
Has driven them downward to the twilight fold
And lulled each restless breaking wave to sleep;
A thin cloud, wrapped about the sunset's gold,
O'er fallen waves a little rain doth weep;
Surely the secret Lazarus never told
Lies buried somewhere in the silent deep.

II. THE HIDDEN PURPOSE

Silver the river flows out of the West—
Into the deeps of the ocean she flings
Her singing streams and her radiant springs—
Serenely she flows to her age-long rest.
Child of the hills and the green meadows' guest,
Here under the flash of the sea-bird's wings
She learns the wild song that the free wind sings,
Great waves and new wonders surge in her breast.
Blue sweep her tides o'er the opaline shells,
For her joy no longer the primrose blows,
She scorns the high hills and the shadowy dells,
Forgetting the lily and false to the rose,
She is faithful unto her hidden wells
And straight to the heart of the deep she goes.

III. "WHERE GREAT WAVES BREAK"

Far from the downs and the safe farm lands
And the quiet meadows and comforting trees,

And the gladness of men who take their ease,
Where the tide flows over treacherous sands,
Earth fenced about with her sharp rocks stands,
With her waters gathered about her knees,
Where the breaking waves of impossible seas
Build up dream houses not made with hands—
The soil is scant and stubborn and bare,
There is light and to spare and yet not a sound
Save the surge of the wild sea everywhere;
But the grimmest of rocks are folded round
By the glory of moving waters fair,
And where great waves break there is holy ground.

IV. THE LOST COLOUR [1]

The small blue waves in the great flood of light
Break on sunk rocks and shiver and are still,
Whilst seas of gold flow onward with a will—
Great waves that break on the far mountain height,
Or foam away through yellow cornfields bright,
Where to the sunlight strains each wind-swept hill,
And earth holds up her cup for heaven to fill
With the clear glory of the gold and white.
Outcast from earth the ripples scattered lie,
Reflected, tossed back like a baffled prayer,
Gliding through silent pools of shining air,
Far from the broken sunbeams, high and dry
Above the green world, flooding everywhere
In deep lost lakes of blueness, the vast sky.

V. SHELLS

Cowries among the rocks the children find,
Sharp cut and shining in the sunset glow,
Eternal victims of the ebb and flow,
Moulded by rhythms of the mournful wind
In those deep waters, terrible and blind,
Where mighty waves draw out the under-tow,

[1] From an essay of Tyndall's.

And the sea's precious things drift to and fro,
And God moulds all things mortal to His mind.
Breaker of Waves, and Lord of the High Tide,
Has the long pilgrimage no end nor goal?
Is there no peace here under the blue sky?
Nothing but sand and storm and rock and shoal,
And the dark water's sullen heave and sigh,
The eternal tumult of the baffled soul?

VI. WAVES

Surely this life is as a flowing wave,
Foaming itself away on rock and shoal
And thundering into many a dark sea-cave,
And finding many a dim mysterious goal
Where on black rocks the Atlantic breakers rave,
Shattering in wrath the sea's untroubled whole—
Or near the blue hill and white cairn of Maeve
Flinging on grey sands down a silver soul,
Waves of the world and children of the tide,
Broken and battered on earth's sharp-set shore.
Were it not then much better to abide
Far from the endless elemental war,
In the sea's deep and silent heart to hide,
And break on the world's jaggèd edge no more?

VII. TRAGEDY

Dark earth of fading leaves and dying flowers
Behold, the blue and golden summer air,
And mighty waters moving everywhere,
And all the joy of sunshine and swift showers,
Are but the gentleness of kindly powers
That help us with cold strengthening hands to bear
Our restless doom and agonising share
Of the great sorrow of this birth of ours.
Yet in this world of waves and flashing wings
We dream awhile of lost and broken spheres,

And learn among life's deep mysterious springs
That pain is all the wisdom of our years,
And sorrow, deepest of life's hidden things,
From all men's eyes at last shall dry the tears.

VIII. KNOCKNAREA

Where silver lights and twilight shadows glide,
And the last coloured air grows tense and keen,
Floating aloft in the pale water's sheen
The mountains seem to rise out of the tide,
So blue it looks and near the other side
Of that great stretch of sea that lies between,
Though many meadows gold and white and green,
And grassy lawns, do on that far shore hide.
For all men's ways, trodden of weary feet
By many pilgrims, up the mountain wind,
Past fields of barley and deep golden wheat:
Some on the haunted cairn still hope to find
The light of dreams, and some but dig for peat
Where the high hills hold fire for all mankind.

IX. BY THE SEA

The people who live in the Midlands know
How to build cities and temples and towers,
And live fair lives in gardens of flowers
Where round their windows the roses blow.
But we, who can neither reap nor sow,
Find little enough in the land that is ours;
We have lost touch of the green earth's powers;
The tides of our being ebb and flow
With those lonely waters that all men shun.
We seek the swift current's secret goal:
Ours are the dreams that are many and one,
The waves that shatter the sea that is whole,
The spirit's rhythm of wind and sun,
And eternal broken waves of the soul.

X. WALLS

Free to all souls the hidden beauty calls,
The sea-thrift dwelling on her spray-swept height,
The lofty rose, the low-grown aconite,
The gliding river and the stream that brawls
Down the sharp cliffs with constant breaks and falls—
All these are equal in the equal light—
All waters mirror the one Infinite.
God made a garden, it was men built walls;
But the wide sea from men is wholly freed:
Freely the great waves rise and storm and break,
Nor softlier go for any land-lord's need,
Where rhythmic tides flow for no miser's sake
And none hath profit of the brown sea-weed,
But all things give themselves, yet none may take.

THE VAGRANT'S ROMANCE

(A REINCARNATION PHANTASY)

This was the story never told
By one who cared not for the world's gold.

One of the idle and unwise,
A beggar with unfathomable eyes.

One who had nothing but dreams to give
To men who are eager to labour and live.

For the world in its wisdom deep and dim
Had taken all pleasure and treasure from him.

This was the story his soul could tell,
Immortal and unfathomable.

There was no record in his brain,
He did not know he should live again.

But there was one who read the whole,
Buried deep in a dead man's soul.

"In the days of Atlantis, under the wave,
I was a slave, the child of a slave.

When the towers of Atlantis fell,
I died and was born again in hell.

From that sorrowful prison I did escape
And hid myself in a hero's shape.

But few years had I of love or joy,
A Trojan I fell at the Siege of Troy.

I came again in a little while,
An Israelite slave on the banks of the Nile.

Then did I comfort my grief-laden heart
With the magic lore and Egyptian art.

Fain was I to become Osiris then,
But soon I came back to the world of men.

By the Ganges I was an outcast born,
A wanderer and a child of scorn.

By the waters of Babylon I wept,
My harp amongst the willows slept.

In the land of Greece I opened my eyes,
To reap the fields of Plotinus the Wise.

When the great light shattered the world's closed bars,
I was a shepherd who gazed at the stars.

For lives that were lonely, obscure, apart,
I thank the Hidden One, in my heart,

That always and always under the sun
I went forth to battle and never won.

A slayer of men, I was doomed to abide,
For ever and aye, on the losing side.

Whenever I dream of the wonderful goal,
I thank the hidden God in my soul

That though I have always been meanly born,
A tiller of earth and a reaper of corn,

Whenever through ages past and gone
The light divine for a moment shone,

Whenever piercing laborious night
A ray fell straight from the Light of Light,

Whenever amid fierce lightning and storm
The divine moved in a human form,

Whenever the earth in her cyclic course
Shook at the touch of an unknown force,

Whenever the cloud of dull years grew thin
And a great star called to the light within,

I have braved storm and labour and sun
To stand at the side of that Holy One.

No matter how humble my birth has been,
There are few who have seen what I have seen.

Mine the shepherd's star and the reaper's reward,
And the dream of him who fell by the sword.

One thing I have learned the long years through,
To know the false words from the true.

The slave who toiled on the banks of the Nile
With wisdom gladdened his long exile.

From Buddha at eve by the Ganges' side
An outcast learnt the worth of the world's pride.

To the tired reaper, when day was done,
Did Plotinus unveil the hidden sun.

Amongst the stars, on a Syrian night,
A ragged shepherd found the Light of Light.

From dream to dream, o'er valley and hill,
I followed the Lord Christ's wandering will.

Kings there are who would barter a throne
For the long day's toil and the light unknown,

The deed of the strong and the word of the wise,
And the night under cold and starry skies—

The white light of dawn on the hillside shed
On Him who had nowhere to lay His head.

Behold there are kings who would change with me,
For the love of the ancient mystery.

Shepherd and reaper and slave I have been,
There are few who have seen what I have seen.

I have been a gipsy since those days,
And lived again in the wild wood ways.

Wise with the lore of those hidden things,
Learnt from Lord Christ in His wanderings,

Beggar and reaper and shepherd and slave,
I am one who rests not in any grave;

I will follow each stormy light divine,
And the secret of all things shall be mine.

These things have I seen, would you bid me mourn
That I was never an Emperor born? "

HARVEST

Though the long seasons seem to separate
Sower and reaper or deeds dreamed and done,
Yet when a man reaches the Ivory Gate
Labour and life and seed and corn are one.

Because thou art the doer and the deed,
Because thou art the thinker and the thought,
Because thou art the helper and the need,
And the cold doubt that brings all things to nought,

Therefore in every gracious form and shape
The world's dear open secret shalt thou find,
From the One Beauty there is no escape
Nor from the sunshine of the Eternal mind.

The patient labourer, with guesses dim,
Follows this wisdom to its secret goal.
He knows all deeds and dreams exist in him,
And all men's God in every human soul.

THE ANTI-SUFFRAGIST

The princess in her world-old tower pined
A prisoner, brazen-caged, without a gleam
Of sunlight, or a windowful of wind;
She lived but in a long lamp-lighted dream.

They brought her forth at last when she was old;
The sunlight on her blanchèd hair was shed
Too late to turn its silver into gold.
"Ah, shield me from this brazen glare!" she said.

THE VISION OF NIAMH

Niamh was perhaps the Uranian Aphrodite of Irish legend—the goddess of remote and spiritual beauty.

Life grows so clear, beneath the dreaming lamp,
I can see through the darkness of the grave,
How, long ago in her high mountain camp
The stars shone on the stormy soul of Maeve.

And leaning from the shadow of a star
With hands outstretched to hold the hands of clay,
One looked into her spirit fairer far
Than sun or moon of any mortal day.

Oh Niamh, thou art child of the dim hours
Between the day and night, when Summer flings
A little flashing dew on the wild flowers,
And all the starlight glimmers in thy wings.

Thou sorrow of lost beauty, thou strange queen
Who calls to men's soul out of twilight seas,
Whose white hands break the stars in silver sheen,
Whose voice is as the wind in the fir trees.

For thee Maeve left her kingdom and her throne,
And all the gilded wisdom of the wise,
And dwelt among the hazel trees alone
So that she might look into Niamh's eyes.

No sorrow of lost battles any more
In her enchanted spirit could abide;
Straight she forgot the long and desolate war,
And how Fionavar for pity died.

Ah, Niamh, still the starry lamp burns bright,
I can see through the darkness of the grave,
How long ago thy soul of starry light
Was very dear to the brave soul of Maeve.

THE PROMISE OF SPEED

Drive faster, the spirit out of the vast
Stands in the storm knocking at the heart's door,
There's a truce, there's a truce in the ancient war,
And my heart and my soul are at peace at last.

Fast follow the clouds on their wind-driven wings,
The white road writhes under our rushing wheels,
And rent with fierce rapture the air reveals
The innermost truth at the heart of things.

Now, through the torn sunlight and shaken blue air,
Waves of the fury and storm of our speed
Thrill to the heart of the hard world's need,
Break on the stones of the earth's despair.

Light shines in the body's innermost glooms,
The senses thrill, with mysterious power,
The deeps of the heart where a magic flower
In a rapture of life and laughter blooms.

Dark element rushing forth into light
In the crumbling brain and the vanishing fire,
She shall not die with the dead desire;
She shall not abide in the shades of night.

Blue sky, the immortal design of her!
In thy gleam is her dream-power manifest,
To build up a palace fit for her guest,
A prison fit for her prisoner.

Therefore, long after the last disgrace
Of ashes to ashes and earth to earth,
She stands at the gate of the second birth,
She too is of proud eternal race.

She who was one with the grass and the weed
Shall be one with the sunshine, one with the soul,
One with the restless illuminate Whole,
One with the flower who was one with the seed.

She who was one with the wind and the storm,
One with the whirling and glittering stars,
Shall break through the elemental bars
And fold her white dreams in the Ultimate Form.

She who swayed in the shadows and flashed in the sun,
And danced with the hail on the desolate plain,
And rose in the rainbow and fell in the rain,
Shall be gathered at last to the deeps of the One.

She who lay dark at the roots of the flowers
Shall soar with the White May and shine with the Rose,
And gleam in the River of Life that flows
Deep under the Spirit's embattled towers.

She who was one with the broken sod,
One with the worm and one with the dust,
One with the terror, one with the trust,
Shall be one with the radiant and lightning-winged god.

Oh, dim burns the lamp of the Infinite!
In the unknown Spirit's innermost shrine
Does the little candle of this world shine;
No shadowy power can quench the frailest light.

No man shall sever the part from the whole,
Nought shall be refuse or thrown away,
The sculptor shall never forget the clay,
The Body knocks at the door of the Soul.

THE ROMANCE OF MAEVE

The harvest is scant, and the labourer,
Returning at sunset with so few sheaves,
Has gathered gold bracken and silver fir
And boughs of the elm and the brown beech leaves.

Fuel enough for the evening blaze,
When the blue of the sky grows wintry and pale,
And the pilgrim home from the wild wood ways
Can read by the fire an ancient tale:

How a great Queen could cast away her crown,
The tumult of her high victorious pride,
To rest among the scattered fir-cones brown
And watch deep waters through the moonlight glide.

"I"

"All this is threaded on Me as jewels on a string."
Bhagavad Gita.

If I could be one with the waves of grief
That break on the earth's unquiet shores,
One with belief and unbelief,
The digger of graves and the maker of wars,

One with the passionate dreams of the brave,
One with the changing and idle throng,
One with the tyrant, one with the slave,
I should be one with the whole world's song,

One with the rising and falling tides,
The guiding stars and the perilous deep
One with the opal shadow that glides
Over the blue-lit mountain steep,

One with the flash of storm-driven wings,
One with the river of light that flows
Over the meanest of trivial things
Into the heart of the wild rose.

My heart would be as the moonlight still,
The silver light on the cold night wind,
The soul of good in the evil will,
The dream of peace in the painful mind.

If I could lose myself in the whole,
My soul in the sunshine, my heart in the storm
I should find peace in the human soul,
And the spirit of God in a human form.

CLEOPATRA'S PEARL

In the deep world unseen,
Under the wash of the tide,
On bright sands coraline
Did the pearl of pearls abide
Till the Queen's valiant slave,
He who had eaten her bread,
Sank down through the blue wave
To the land of the white and red,
The land where no man may embalm or
bury the wandering dead.

The evil sharks in the bay
Waited in vain to kill.
More swift and subtle than they,
The fisherman had his will.

The pearl that shone in the Queen's hair
Brought light from the shades profound.
The fisher had night for his share:
Yea, the pearl fisher was drowned,
And clasped in his rigid hand was the glory
of Egypt found.

Ah, the Queen had a crown of gold!
Such a pearl for her crown!
With a bitter acid and cold,
She has melted it down.
Hers was the precious draft,
White from the shades of night;
And the fisherman's broken raft
Lies buried and out of sight.
But deep in the diver's soul burns clear the
lost pearl's hidden light.

BROKEN GLORY

IN MEMORY OF AUGUST 3rd, 1916
"For Love and the Voice on the Wind"

BROKEN GLORY

THE AGE OF GOLD

When Jacob's Ladder reached the skies,
And the earth shone like other stars,
And men were not called great and wise,
Nor had they fashioned prison bars,
And tigers had not learned to slay—
I slept alone in the dark wood,
And when the sun rose every day
I saw why God called his work good.

GOVERNMENT

The rulers of the earth, savage and blind,
Have dug Gethsemane for all mankind.
For their honour and their glory and their pride,
In every age the heroes of all nations died.
Thus Joan of Arc and Socrates were slain
By the world's bane,
Jesus Christ a thousand years ago,
They servèd so,
And Roger Casement, just the other day,
Went the same way.
Now is their hour of power and life's despair
From blasted earth and desecrated air
The universal death that is their dream
Flows o'er the earth in a great lava stream,
Whelming men's thoughts in floods of liquid fire,
To light the old world's funeral pyre.

Shall then our hearts in hell-fire burn
To serve their turn?
God's splendid rebels, and men's stupid slaves
Earn the same graves.
Oh! rather let us scorn life's baser gains,
The joyless spoils of death-strewn battle plains,
Where for our rulers' glory and their lust
Some million human brains are bloodstained dust.
Far better labour for that purpose known
Unto the gods alone,
That hides behind the darkness and the storm
In every human form,
If but to die on God's dear battle plain,
Where daisies mount to life through sun and rain,
Whilst the wild winds their rapturous tumults rouse,
And the trees fight for beauty in green boughs.
Peace be to those who rule and hate and kill—
The world's true will
Has brought, in this dark hour of pain and strife,
A violet to life.

EASTER WEEK

Grief for the noble dead
Of one who did not share their strife,
And mourned that any blood was shed,
Yet felt the broken glory of their state,
Their strange heroic questioning of Fate
Ribbon with gold the rags of this our life.

HEROIC DEATH, 1916

No man shall deck their resting-place with flowers;
Behind a prison wall they stood to die,
Yet in those flowerless tragic graves of ours
Buried, the broken dreams of Ireland lie.

No cairn-heaped mound on a high windy hill
With Irish earth the hero's heart enfolds,
But a burning grave at Pentonville,
The broken heart of Ireland holds.

Ah! ye who slay the body, how man's soul
Rises above your hatred and your scorns—
All flowers fade as the years onward roll,
Theirs is the deathless wreath—a crown of thorns.

TO CONSTANCE—IN PRISON

Outcast from joy and beauty, child of broken hopes forlorn,
Lost to the magic mountains and parted from all flowers,
Robbed of the harvest moon that shines on far-off fields of corn,
Bereft of raindrops on green leaves, bright wrecks of fallen showers.

Nay, not outcast, whilst through your soul a sudden rapture thrills,
And all your dreams are shaken by the salt Atlantic wind,
The gods descend at twilight from the magic-hearted hills,
And there are woods and primroses in the country of your mind.

Yours is that inner Ireland beyond green fields and brown,
Where waves break dawn-enchanted on the haunted Rosses shore,
And clouds above Ben Bulben fling their coloured shadows down,
Whilst little rivers shine and sink in wet sands at Crushmor.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN PRISON

Do not be lonely, dear, nor grieve
This Christmas Eve.
Is it so vain a thing
That your heart's harper, Dark Roseen,
A wandering singer, yet a queen,
Crownèd with all her seventeen stars,
Outside your prison bars
Stands carolling?

TO C. M. ON HER PRISON BIRTHDAY

FEBRUARY 1917

What has time to do with thee,
Who hast found the victor's way
To be rich in poverty,
Without sunshine to be gay,
To be free in a prison cell?
Nay on that undreamed judgment day,
When on the old world's scrap-heap flung,
Powers and empires pass away,
Radiant and unconquerable
Thou shalt be young.

ROGER CASEMENT

I dream of one who is dead,
As the forms of green trees float and fall in the water,
The dreams float and fall in my mind.

I dream of him wandering in a far land,
I dream of him bringing hope to the hopeless,
I dream of him bringing light to the blind.

I dream of him hearing the voice,
The bitter cry of Kathleen ni Houlighaun
On the salt Atlantic wind.

I dream of the hatred of men,
Their lies against him who knew nothing of lying,
Nor was there fear in his mind.

I dream of our hopes and fears,
The long bitter struggle of the broken-hearted,
With hearts that were poisoned and hard.

I dream of the peace in his soul,
And the early morning hush on the grave of a hero
In the desolate prison yard.

I dream of the death that he died,
For the sake of God and Kathleen ni Houlighaun,
Yea, for Love and the Voice on the Wind.

I dream of one who is dead.
Above dreams that float and fall in the water
A new star shines in my mind.

COMRADES

The peaceful night that round me flows,
Breaks through your iron prison doors,
Free through the world your spirit goes,
Forbidden hands are clasping yours.

The wind is our confederate,
The night has left her doors ajar,
We meet beyond earth's barrèd gate,
Where all the world's wild Rebels are.

FRANCIS SHEEHY-SKEFFINGTON

DUBLIN, APRIL 26, 1916

No green and poisonous laurel wreath shall shade
His brow, who dealt no death in any strife,
Crown him with olive who was not afraid
To join the desolate unarmed ranks of life.

Who did not fear to die, yet feared to slay,
A leader in the war that shall end war,
Unarmed he stood in ruthless Empire's way,
Unarmed he stands on Acheron's lost shore.

Yet not alone, nor all unrecognized,
For at his side does that scorned Dreamer stand,
Who in the Olive Garden agonized,
Whose Kingdom yet shall come in every land,

When driven men, who fight and hate and kill
To order, shall let all their weapons fall,
And know that kindly freedom of the will
That holds no other human will in thrall.

UTOPIA

Cruelty, bloodshed and hate
Rule the night and the day,
The whole earth is desolate,
To what God shall one pray?

Is there a force that can end
The woe of the world's war?
Yea, when a friend meets a friend
There shall be peace once more.

For love at the heart of the storm
Breaks the waves of wild air,
And God in our human form
Is life's answer to prayer.

THE ARTIST IN WAR TIME

Oh, shining splendour of the human form
That takes my heart by storm,
Strong as a river, subtle as a prayer,
Or the first moon ray in the twilight air,
Line upon line of moving silver light,
Building our dreams up to the spirit's height,

Enfolding the grey dust and the earth's green
In coloured ecstasies of light unseen!
The Spirit that moves among the forest trees
Has doubtless built this shrine,
That erring men may fall upon their knees
And worship God and man, one soul divine—
Yea, and the little children of the earth
That make the world sweet with their wanderings,
And wild-willed pilgrims of mysterious birth
Gliding across the sky on silent wings.
Ah, surely no man born dare rise and slay
Eternal Beauty wrapped in robes of clay,
Or break and blast and utterly destroy
Life's little ivory tower of fragile joy!
Loud answerèd the black and stupid guns,
" We are the darlings of man's heart, the wise
Call us the world's Redeemers, mighty ones
Have bid us clear for them the troubled skies,
And holy souls have blessed us, for we stand
For God Almighty in a godless land.
God, Who art feeble grown and blind and dumb,
Take heart, through us Thy Kingdom yet shall come."
Labourers in mad mechanic purpose bound,
They dig in vain Immortal Beauty's grave,
And bury the very starlight underground,
And crash above the song of wind and wave
Their monstrous rhythms of fire and steel and lead.
On some red field or battle-blasted hill
Men dream the Eternal Beauty lieth dead,
And all our souls are subject to their will.
Most ancient Beauty, scorned and thrust aside,
Who doth yet in white peace and silence dwell,
Pity us tortured slaves of bloodstained pride,
Lean out once more from the invisible,
Let fall from thy dream-haunted obscure throne
One ray of moonlight in earth's broken brain.
Our souls are thine, Belovèd, thine alone,
Behold thy lost world at thy feet again.

THE LOST TRAVELLER'S DREAM

Men say amid the hosts of hidden morrows hides
A real day lit with sunshine, wind-blown and dewdrop-pearled,
A day of gentle dreams and magic flowing tides,
When dead shall lie the hates and sorrows of the world.

Alas! 'tis but a flame that falters on the wind,
A little spark of hope quenched in the world's dark wars,
A phantom light that haunts the sleep of men born blind,
A shipwrecked sailor's dream of lost and perilous shores.

Yet ever in the twilight our hearts throw off their load,
And fearless dreams with coloured wings in rapture shine,
Yea, you may meet the gods on any mountain road,
And every labourer knows the heart of earth divine.

Shall not the starlit Beauty, leaning from the hills,
Come down at last with her great winds for our release,
And lay cold hands of quiet on hot human wills,
And move the souls of men to Mercy and to Peace?

THE ETERNAL REBEL

1914

The phantoms flit before our dazzled eyes,
Glory and honour, wrath and righteousness,
The agèd phantoms in their bloodstained dress,
Vultures that fill the world with ravenous cries,

Swarming about the rock where, chained apart,
In age-long pain Prometheus finds no rest
From the divine flame burning in his breast,
And vultures tearing at a human heart.

Not yet the blessed hours on golden wings
Bring to the crucified their sure relief,
Deeper and deeper grows the ancient grief,
Blackest of all intolerable things.

Eternal Rebel, sad, and old, and blind,
Bound with a chain, enslaved by every one
Of the dark gods who hide the summer sun,
Yet art thou still the saviour of mankind.

Free soul of fire, break down their chains and bars,
Drive out those unclean phantoms of the brain,
Till every living thing be friends again,
And our lost earth true comrade to the stars.

THE WORLD'S GRIEF

" In all earthly happenings
Claws are better far than wings—
Force has dug the grave of Love,"
Said the Tiger to the Dove.

" A little venom on the tongue
Beats any song that e'er was sung—
Great are lies and shall prevail,"
Said the Snake to the Nightingale.

" Always with the great pack fight,
For the pack is always right—
Oh, be loyal if you can,"
Said the Wolf unto the Man.

" For every good under the sun
Man must fight with sword or gun—
Woe to the gentle and the mild,"
Said Man to the human Child.

" In the war of right and wrong
The victory is to the strong—
Great guns must clear your darkened sky,"
Said Man to the Lord Most High.

The moon turned pale, the stars stood still.
" Peace upon earth, to men good will,"
The Angel to the Shepherd cried.
Christ turned in His sleep and sighed.

DREAMS

The swallows flit through twisted branches fine
And silver arches of the bare plane trees,
Where scant stiff leaves sway in the passing breeze,
Clinging to dreams of May, green robed, divine.

Alas! our dreams are only of the dread
Red fields of France where unreaped harvests rot,
And the One Soul by all the world forgot
Moves silently amid the hosts of dead.

German or French or English, words most vain
To that which knows not any nation's pride,
Whose pity is as all men's sorrow wide,
Folded about our broken world of pain.

Knowing no foe in any death or life,
Moving in dreams in every darkened mind,
Whilst still to death the blind lead on the blind,
That comradeship is deeper than our strife.

Men drench the green earth and defile her streams
With blood, and blast her very fields and hills
With the mechanic iron of their wills,
Yet in her sad heart still the spirit dreams.

True to all life, war-worn and battle-tossed
Doth the One Spirit, faithful to the end,
Live in that peace that shall be the world's friend,
The dream of God by men so lightly lost.

TO C. A.

You seem to be a woman of the world,
Gorgeous in silky robes of blue and green,
Hair in soft shining coils, white throat bepearled.
It is not true, you are what you have been.

I know you for the Umbrian monk you are,
Brother of Francis and the sun and rain,
Brother of every silver pilgrim star,
And the white oxen on the golden plain.

Where one bird's song the evening silence thrills
To beauty, white your mountain convent gleams,
Brown-robed, barefoot, across the Tuscan hills
I see you wander, smiling at your dreams,

Stopping to help a peasant at his toil,
Gathering the olives, watering the vine,
Guiding the plough, turning the red-brown soil,
Sharing the evening meal of bread and wine,

And passing on your way at the day's end
To sleep on the pine-shadowed, leaf-strewn sod,
Fearlessly finding all the world your friend,
And living in the Beauty that is God.

PINEHURST

1916

Dew-pearlèd cobwebs glitter on green boughs,
Beneath our feet the grass is wet with dew,
It seems as if this clear dawn must arouse
Our broken world to something strange and new.

Deep in the high-built fortress of the pines,
Lost to her stars dark night imprisoned lies,
Near my hushed soul in peace a white rose shines,
Like a new dream down flung from ancient skies.

Alas, the bugles on the distant plain—
The guns break forth with their insistent din,
The dews of noon-day leave a crimson stain
On grass, that all men's feet must wander in.

Oh, singing splendour of the morning furled
About the souls of trees, the hearts of flowers,
Have you no dream of beauty for the world—
This bitter bloodstained world we men call ours?

THE LITTLE GIRL'S RIDDLE

A JELLY-FISH afloat on the bright wave—
A white seagull—a great blue butterfly—
A hunted hare—a wolf in a dark cave;
All these I was; which one of these was I?

A gold-maned lion, mad with rage and fear,
A white bear ranging over trackless snow,
A savage living by my bow and spear,
A mighty fighter giving blow for blow,

A student gazing at the starry skies,
A Rebel planning the downfall of Kings,
A searcher of the wisdom of the wise,
A questioner of all mysterious things,

A priestess singing hymns to Proserpine,
An old king weary on a golden throne,
A marble-carver freeing limbs divine
From their cold bondage of enfolding stone,

A hot-head poet by the world reviled,
A heretic of desolate dreams and dire,
And now a little silent long-legged child
Weeping alone beside the nursery fire.

Ye who have guessed the hidden lights that burn
Behind the blue wings of the butterfly,
In a child's grief the riddle's answer learn—
" I was all these—yet none of these was I."

AN EXPERIENCE

I LABOURED and studied and toiled and thought,
And it all came to nought—
My thoughts and my mind and my soul seemed dead
As the books that I read—
When suddenly a little door,
Hidden far down in the deeps of consciousness,
Swung open, and a ray of light
Flooded each dim recess.
I left myself's safe shore
And swam across the night.
Deep down beyond life's overthrow
Where only the reckless care to go,
I caught a glimpse of a star divine,
That changed the lights and shadows of all things
With rays as swift as a seagull's wings.
And for a moment brief
As the flash and fall of a leaf,
A yellow leaf on a hurrying stream,
I saw strange meanings shift and change and gleam,
As if some new enraptured hope
Had shaken life's kaleidoscope
To patterns little understood,
Beyond the evil and the good—
It may have been a dream
But it was not dead
Like the books I read,
And the labour and the toil and the pain
Seemed suddenly worth while,
If I might see and understand again
Life's strange and secret smile.
Shall my sad heart be prisoned evermore
In a dark cave behind a barrèd door?

TO J. W. IN WINCHESTER PRISON

Yet once again the barred and bolted gate,
The smiling face seen through a wire cage,
The foolish tools of state-entrenchèd hate,
The prisoner's dream beyond all fear and rage.

Outside men's maniac fury shrieks and raves,
And dark submission chained in sunlight dwells,
The only free souls in a race of slaves
Live in strange solitudes and prison cells.

THE WOOD

Turning in blind distress
From war's dark ugliness,
O'er the wide common heather-spread
Through rain-soaked grass I fled,
And crooked ways half understood—
Gorse needles tore my ankles bare,
And wiry brambles clutched my hair;
Thus came I to the haunted wood,
And there where carven fronds of gentle ferns
Wave o'er the brown leaf-strewn and mystic ground,
And the world's starry light still burns,
Beyond all hate and fear I found
What once men found in marble-hearted Greece,
Beauty, the world's lost peace.

SACRIFICE

" If Jesus Christ had not been crucified,
God's mercy would have passed this sad world by."—
" Our deed is then most greatly justified,"
Pilate and Caiaphas might well reply.
" If love and mercy had been scattered wide
In all men's hearts, so that no judge would try
Or slay his brother, then were God's will denied,
And His high purpose broken utterly."

" If Christ had never died, this world of ours
Would have been lost and damned "?—Nay, rather say:
" If Christ had not been foully slain, the flowers
Would fairer bloom in fairer fields to-day,
The world would have been saved by sun and showers,
Mercy and Truth in the old glorious way."

THE POET'S GOD

" What is God? " men said in the West,
The Lord of Good and Ill,
Rewarder of the blest,
Judge of the evil will.

" What is God? " men said in the East,
The universal soul
In man, and bird, and beast,
The self of the great whole.

I saw the primrose flower
Rise out of the green sod,
In majesty and power,
And I said " There is Love, there is God."

THE SUBMERGED APOLLO

(A STATUE BY PHEIDIAS FOUND IN THE TIBER)

The Vision fair has failed and passed away,
And down beneath deep waters drownèd lies,
As under the brown stream for centuries
The fairest of the gods forgotten lay.

The barnacles made rough his carven breast,
His patient brow through years of ooze and slime
Bore the hard muddy dull embrace of time,
The burden of a light unmanifest.

What of the secret beyond good or ill?
Have not men quenched the fair light of the mind
Beneath a flood of mud-stained waters blind
The black ungentle tides of angry will,

The rushing river of our passionate woes,
The flowing joys and fears, the pious dream?
Deep down beneath the waters of that stream,
The lost God dwelleth in the heart's repose.

Who has not seen the flash of white limbs shine
Out of the deep, through sand-strewn twilight dim
And darkened waters, in the mind of him
Who in his soul of souls is yet divine?

Yea, in the deeps of each obscurèd mind
The drownèd god in broken beauty lies.
When shall Apollo from the Tiber rise,
And a new music cry along the wind?

Joy, that the dweller under the dark wave
Is still a secret power, a living part
Of the eternal granite-folded heart,
The deep and patient life that knows no grave.

THESE THREE . . .

Glory of heart and brain,
All that has made me man—
Where the forest waves and swings,
Out in the wind and rain,
Flies together and sings . . .
All of us children of Pan. . . .

Soul driven by grief and desire
Onward to some lost goal,
Fierce with the rhythm and storm
Of the subterranean fire,
Dream of the Ultimate Form,
Child of the Infinite Soul.

Mind that is fairer than these,
Stronger than fire or wind,
Gazing where thou hast trod
Pan must fall on his knees,
Thou art child of the Innermost God,
The Universal Mind.

TO DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

"THE SAD YEARS"

You whom I never knew,
Who lived remote, afar,
Yet died of the grief that tore my heart,
Shall we live through the ages alone, apart,
Or meet where the souls of the sorrowful are
Telling the tale on some secret star,
How your death from the root of my sorrow grew—
You whom I never knew?

Nay, perhaps in the coming years
Down here on our earth again,
We shall meet as strangers on some strange shore,
And dream we have known one another before,
In a past life, weeping over the slain—
Because of a thrill and a throb of pain,
And eyes grown suddenly salt with tears . . .
Perhaps . . . in the coming years. . . .

UNPUBLISHED POEMS

UNPUBLISHED POEMS

THE WORLD IS ROUND

THERE is no edge to the sunshine nor the wind nor the driving rain,
There is no bound to the courage that holds the whole world in its grip,
No sheer abyss divides our soul from the souls of the slain,
Softly out of the frozen ground the delicate snowdrops slip.
So we have found that the world is round;
And if you sail far enough on the outward-bound ship,
The wind and the sea and a brave heart will bring you home again.

A SYMBOL

I SAW Blind Justice o'er the Nations reign
Blood sated, leaning on her stupid sword,
And in her hands the scales of sin and pain,
By all the Lovers of the world abhorred.

I dreamt the Spirit of the Fair and Wise
Broke down those hideous scales of Right and Wrong,
Tore the foul bandage from her starry eyes,
Shattered the Sword of Justice with a song.

THE TRIBUNAL

FOR the Hidden One in every heart,
Lost star in the world's night,
Fire that burns in the soul of art,
The Light within the Light—

For the gentleness of Buddha's dream
And Christ's rejected truth,
The treasure under the world's stream,
Pearl of pity and ruth—

Before six ignorant men and blind
Reckless they rent aside
The vail of Isis in the mind. . . .
Men say they shirked and lied.

A MOMENT'S EXPERIENCE

Ah, push aside the vail of hate and strife
And gaze if but for a white moment's while,
Beyond the meagre bitterness of strife,
Into Eternity's most secret smile,

Catching a glimpse of that mysterious hour
When the world's purpose shines beyond its plan,
The sunset palace and the ivory tower
Of him who shall be called the Son of Man.

HEIMWEH

In Florence, my heart's city, far away,
A tower springs to heaven marble-wrought,
Pale rose and ivory heal this world of gray
And Gabriel's lily shines through dreamlit thought.
But here in this dull land of uncarved clay
In a dark snare my weary soul is caught,
Through fogbound streets day follows yesterday,
Beauty and life and light are brought to naught.
Peace: in the mind of him who wills in Deed
The ivory sculptured thoughts pace to and fro,
The tree of life springs out of scattered seed,
Amid the thorns and nettles lilies grow;
And sudden in the sunset glitters clear
The marble tower of hope austere.

TRUTH

"I am the Bright and Morning Star."

Spirit patient and wise,
Soul at the heart of things,
Out of whose broken deeps arise
Colour and form and beauty herself in a
rhythm of flashing wings—

Soul of each dim fir-wood
And green rain-haunted lawn,
Dream by the world withstood,
Vision of pilgrim and poet and seer, and song
of the birds at dawn—

Spirit mighty to mould
Into beauty the sorrowful will
That fashioned the gods of old
Out of a dream in the hearts of men, and
the marble heart of the hill—

Shalt thou not build anew
Out of sorrow and sighing and tears
In all men's souls, of the heavens blue,
The rainbow-lit lily of peace that grows
on the far-away edge of the years?

Pity for friend and foe,
Love between foe and friend,
Out of the dreamlit caverns flow
Of the God of the Buried River of Stars, who
is all men's God at the end.

MAGNA PECCATRIX

What a man does for Christ he does for all,
Even the least of us; each fair deed done
Doth on all men in light and gladness fall,
The whole world's rainbow from the whole world's sun.

Once through the blackness of primæval night
A huge star burned deep in this sinner's mind;
Great as her sin the Lamp that held the Light,
The everlasting Light of all mankind.

Thus patiently through the long shadow years,
For many a one content her light to share,
Her deed is done again, she kneels with tears
To wash men's feet and wipe them with her hair.

BOREDOM

How dull is this vain talk, thought the Wise Guest,
Reclining at the Feast, rose-crowned, full-fed;
But to the servant, waiting on the rest,
Offering to each man holy wine and bread,
Alert and humble, working all the time,
No talk could matter, stupid or sublime.

A CONVICTION

WHERE is the road out of this world of strife?
Mercy is the Rhythm of the Divine Song.
Who can forgive
Shall be forgiven, who can love shall live,
All-conquering prayer forgiving every wrong
Is the absolute Truth that is Eternal Life.

THE THREE CHORDS

MUSIC affords
In every key
Three common chords:
Foundation stones are these of all our harmony.

Through heaven vibrate
Three common chords,
Beyond all life and fate
And dreams of flaming agonies and fair rewards.

To pity and ruth
The great harps thrill,
Love, Life and Truth,
The very self of God and song of unknown Will.

In the soul of man
The echo rings,
Faith, Hope and Love
Are the Pilgrim's staff and the Angel's wings.

The Way ascends
Out of the strife,
And the road ends
In Love, where faith is truth at last and hope is life.

Oh Christ most wise,
With fire shod,
May we dead arise
To life in the soul and spirit and mind of God.

PRIMROSES, WIND AND RAIN

Beautiful dawn, thou far-flung radiance white,
May our minds be as primroses in spring,
Giving their coloured Beauty back to Light
That calls from earth their lovely blossoming.

Oh, rustling in green trees, great Voice of Life,
May our souls be like birds in the wild air,
Floating and darting, whirling in strange strife,
Wind-blown, swift flashing, singing everywhere.

Thou gentle Rain of Love compassionate,
Fall on waste spaces, in bright fountains rise,
Bearing our spirits beyond Love and Hate
Into the soul of the Eternal skies.

JOAN OF ARC

No, not in visions or fierce ecstasy
To her the spirit came,
But when from the high-set stake
She turned to the kindly monk who by her stood
Begging him for the comfort of the Rood,
Moaning in fear the Everlasting Name—
Then self-forgetful, with a sudden cry,
She warned him of the swiftly mounting flame
And bade him leave her unconsoled to die,
Thrusting him into safety for Christ's sake,
Lest he should share her lonely agony.

CATERPILLAR TO BUTTERFLY

Oh Bright One shining in strange light
Beyond my earthbound sight,
I, living without joy,
In darkness creeping to destroy
The rose's heart, in heavy haunted hours
Of sorrowful greed among green-sheathed flowers,
Sometimes I dream that some far day
I too may flit from height to height
Where the Buddlea hedge on the south slope grows,
Or, folding o'er the great gold rose
My wings of coloured light,
May harmless drink of her full cup,
Scarce stirring chaliced petals fine.
Nay, could I be like you divine,
In one long rapture lifting up
My wings to the blue sky,
I would fly as you fly . . .
Worms dream that once, from the enfolding gloom
Mysterious of a chrysolitic Tomb
Where a dead caterpillar lay,
A Glory rent the shroud and fled
Waving blue wings above the dead,

Scaling the inaccessible skies . . .
But worms are grovelling creatures without eyes . . .
These are but dreams . . . no one can say . . .
I have seen many caterpillars die . . .
I know not, I . . .

CRUCIFIXION

From "The Perilous Light"

In the crowd's multitudinous mind
Terror and passion embrace,
Whilst the darkness heavily blind
Hides face from horror-struck face;
And all men, huddled and dumb,
Shrink from the death-strangled cry
And the hidden terror to come
And the dead men hurrying by.
White gleam the limbs of the dead
Raised high o'er the bloodstained sod,
And the soldier shuddered and said,
" Lo, this was the Son of God."
Nay, but all Life is one,
A wind that wails through the vast,
And this deed is never done,
This passion is never past.
When any son of man by man's blind doom
On any justest scaffold strangled dies,
Once more across the shadow-stricken gloom
Against the sun the dark-winged Horror flies;
A lost voice cries from the far olive trees
Weary and harsh with pain a desolate cry:—
" What ye have done unto the least of these
Is done to God in Heaven, for earth and sky
And bird and beast, green leaves and golden sun,
Men's dreams, the starry dust, the bread, the wine,
Rivers and seas, my soul and His, are one.
Through all things flows one life austere, divine,

Strangling the murderer you are slaying me,
Scattering the stars and leaves like broken bread,
Casting dark shadows on the sunlit sea,
Striking the swallows and the seagulls dead,
Making the red rose wither to its fall,
Darkening the sunshine, blasting the green sod—
Wounding one soul, you wound the soul of all,
The unity of Life, the soul of God."

THE SHEPHERD OF ETERNITY

AND OTHER POEMS

The corn was orient and immortal wheat.
T. TRAHERNE.

THE SHEPHERD OF ETERNITY

Statues of "the Shepherd, the Beautiful One," were carved by early Greek Christians to decorate the fountains of Constantinople.

Joyful and swift, who led
The souls of the dead
In a shadowy band
To the Twilight land,
Surely deaf wert thou to our crying,
In silence conceivèd, in darkness dying,
And we wept as we went
Down the dark descent.
Hermes, thou Beautiful One, thy smile did but mock our despair,
Who wept for the light of the sun and the shining and silvery air.

Glad shepherd of joyless sheep,
We, children of those who weep,
We who have lost all things
Shudder at thy swift wings,
For thou wert deaf to our crying,
In silence conceivèd, in darkness dying,
And thy smile so fair
Knew not woe or despair
As thou leddest thy people to Hades, with sorrow and sighing and tears;
Small profit had they in their dying, of thee and thy radiant years.

Through the grave and the gloom
And the Gateway of Doom,
Through Hades' dim pain,
Back to hard earth again,

With bitterness striving, reviling
The grace of thy passionless smiling,
Dull and helpless and blind
Did we drift with the wind;
Now shall you seek us in vain, where no sun of the world ever shone,
But the shadows flit by the gloomy waves of tideless Acheron.

Now do we kneel at ease
Under the cypress trees,
For the new God who leads the dead
His own tears has shed;—
We have carved on all the fountains
A young shepherd from the mountains,
Being the image of Him
Whose Sorrow made the sunlight dim,
A shepherd of strange melodies, playing the pipes of goat-foot Pan
To call out of her sepulchre the earth's dim soul, the soul of man.

Somewhere beyond the earth
There is respite from birth
For the mourners who stray
Down the Desolate Way.
He who lives in Life, Life-bringing,
Gives a new song for our singing;
And we, who are doomed to go
In darkness to and fro,
Like the wind in the trees, or the driven clouds, or the wandering tide,
Have found at last the place of that peace where our weary souls may abide.

Every fountain to the skies
Clear and foamless shall arise;
There are bright wings for all things,
Even the worms shall have wings;

The Living Waters, ascending,
Rainbow-coloured, shining, blending
With the everlasting Light,
Transfigure the world's night:
This is the Song the Shepherd sang, with many runs and shakes and trills,
The Shepherd of Eternity, piping o'er cypress-shaded hills.

THE CHILD OF PROPHECY[1]

VIRGIL said, "O child, for you
Of itself the plain turns gold with waving corn,
Purple clusters of grapes hang down from the wild thorn,
On the oak's hard trunk lies the honey-dew, . . ."
Mysterious child, for you.

"The gold age returns, the wild
Flames with foxgloves and Egyptian lilies rare,"
Bright acanthus fit for the Emperor's heir,
Or a crown of thorns for another child, . . .
Who knows the will of the wild?

"A new Achilles shall be sent
To a new Troy, crowded with heroes once more,
Another *Argo* shall sail, bound for a far shore,
With a new pilot on a strange quest bent . . ."
Who knows what Virgil meant?

AT THE WATERFALL

As the water fell sheer,
I shuddered to know
Whence it came here
And where it must go.

A child's thoughts at play
Whispered, "Each little stream
Did but yesterday
In the rainbow gleam."

[1] *Eclogue* iv. 28.

And a thought like a friend
In the midst of foes
Said, " Each stream in the end
Into Heaven flows."

THE MIRACLE AT CANA

As the rain soaking down to the vine's root
Is caught up in the wild ways of change,
Where sunlight from the tree's soul draws the fruit,
And water becomes the world's wine, sweet and strange;

Turn Thou the waters of my life to wine,
O Love Eternal, O far-shining Sun,
Who sayest to each man, " What is Mine is thine,"
At the Feast where Spirit and Soul are made one.

THE QUEST

Deep in that world where pale tides ebb and flow,
And wild shapes wander under the vast blue,
A man once sought, beneath the shadow show,
To find himself, the living one, the true.

And first he met a gentle silver shade,
And held it as it would have floated by.
He cried to it. " Art thou my self? " he said.
" Nay, but the form of all thy dreams am I."

" Not thou, but thine," thin voices and swift gleams
Mocked at the darkness of the lonely quest,
For though he found his soul, his burning dreams,
Himself seemed always an unbidden guest.

He laboured on through sorrow, toil, and strife,
Till in the labyrinth a strange voice said,
" I am the Resurrection and the Life."
He woke at last—himself—transfigurèd.

THE CHAPEL IN THE FOREST

With sculptured form the porch is decorate,
The holy Shepherd carved in wood stands there
Where the dark branches of the pines grow thin,
And sunlight blesses the freed forest air,
That they who wander shadowed aisles of fate
May enter softly by the lowly Door,
And find the Hidden Christ who dwells therein,
And know themselves, and go out nevermore.

THE WELL WHERE THE WORLD ENDS

On the King's robe the Mother of Emerald shivered and shone,
Flashing green in the sullen glow of the sacrificial flame,
Whilst, wrapped in a vision ecstatic, the wizard Solomon
Breathed from the height of his glorious hour the Everlasting Name.
The people fell prostrate, the trumpets shrilled, the priests cried aloud;
In vain, in vain, for the Face of the Lord was hidden behind a cloud.

When the Pilgrim spoke to the woman, tired by the sun's hot glare,
As seeking the well at noonday o'er burnt-up grass she trod,
Love sang through the rustling corn in a little wind of prayer,
And Truth came gently into her soul, radiant, the Son of God.
Reflected in quiet waters, strange coloured and clear outlined,
She found the Face of the Lord in the deeps of her inner mind.

As she drew water from the well, the Living Water ran
Shining among her thoughts, singing the heart-breaking
song divine
Of the Spirit that seeks the hidden desolate soul in man
As a miner seeks for a sapphire deep in a perilous mine,
And she fled away triumphant, to bring the news to her
friends
That Spirit and Soul should meet at last at the Well where
the World ends.

REVELATION

I ASKED for news of God from the shining sea,
Flowing in streams of sapphire, tides of chalcedony,
And the little waves were seven, but the great waves were
three.

I asked for news of God from the blue of the air,
For joy and wonder and peace were singing and soaring
there,
And a dream of the Ultimate Beauty answered my prayer.

I asked for news of God from the starlight on the wind:
" We are the children of Heaven, we lighten the dreams
of the blind,
We are the Logos shining under your shadowy mind."

A man stole my coat from me, I asked him for news of
God,
Flinging my cloak before him down on the rain-drenched
sod;
Yea, this was the messenger whose feet with the Truth
were shod.

Out of his mouth there came the Wisdom of the Wise,
And the Life and the Truth and the Love of God shone
from his startled eyes:
My soul rose up to greet him in a great and strange surprise.

LIFE

For God's sake, kill not: Spirit that is breath
With Life the earth's gray dust irradiates;
That which has neither part nor lot with death
Deep in the smallest rabbit's heart vibrates.
Of God we know naught, save three acts of will:
Life that vibrates in every breathing form,
Truth that looks out over the window sill,
And Love that is calling us home out of the storm.

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

He had made of his soul a Temple to hold the Glory of God,
Now his heart is cold, his breath has died into silence, his eyes are dim,
The house that held his radiant desires lies lifeless and rent on the sod,
But his soul arises to splendour eternal out of the wreckage grim,
For to him shall be given a house more fair than the Temple he built for God,
The Glory of God itself is the Temple that manifests him.

THE ACORN

The Acorn is a common thing and small,
Child of the sun and plaything of the wind,
You think it is of no account at all,
Yet at its heart great forces crash and grind.

The Acorn's jade-wrought chalice holds concealed
The Eternal Host, with dreams and death at strife,
Great are the issues, small the battle-field,
Where infinite will drags beauty into life.

The Acorn is a holy thing and dear,
The green leaves shudder out to meet the Light,
The great Tree rushes upward, tier on tier,
Stretching wild boughs towards the Infinite.

IN PRAISE OF LIFE

Sappho said long ago,
" If Death be good,
Why do the Gods not die ? "
Sappho was wise ;
She said, " If Life be ill,
Why do the Gods live still ? "
O beautiful Life, in this grim age of ours
Still art thou crowned with flowers,
Still, like a torrent down a mountain glen,
Thou comest Beloved of men;
Out of the acorn's cup thou dost arise,
And shinest in the squirrel's eyes,
Moulding to grapes the strong soul of the vine.
As Sappho saw thee, thou art yet Divine,
High on the pine-tree's topmost wind-swayed bough,
Deep in the ox's heart that drags the plough,
Guiding the hand of him who sows the grain,
Buried in seed, rising in wheat again;
Where death is under the sun,
Mercy and Life are one.
Oh, leave to all poor creatures made of clay
The shortness of their little shining day;
Take not from the swift nations of the air
Their wide blue house, their radiant stair,
Kill not the smallest thing,
Nor break the frailest wing,
For, buried in Life's stream,
God's purpose and His dream
Gleam gold beneath the tide.
Time is not long, space is not wide,

And every little river is the sea
Potentially;
Transfigured by strange waves and waters wild,
Time will not know his child.
Sappho was right:
Life that is Love is God, and Mercy wise
Is that which never dies—
Life, Love and Light.

TIME

In time the whole of things shall alter,
And the earth shine as shines the sun,
In time the hangman's hands shall falter,
In time the gunner shall leave the gun.

In time the hater shall cease from hating,
In time the judge shall judge no more,
For time the wave of Life is waiting
To thunder on the Eternal Shore.

In time no man shall kill his brother;
Of every living thing the friends,
We shall all see God in one another
Before the day when Time ends.

THE LOGOS OF LIFE

"Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"—*Christ to Martha.*

There was silence for a space,
The sun had ceased to shine,
The ground was wet with tears,
The strange deep flowing tears divine,
Where the sisters knelt on the sod
At the rock-hewn burial place,
Shrinking with indrawn breath
From the hideous sight of death.

Three words shook the spheres. . . .
No deathly damp shall mar
The face of the Morning Star;
There, beyond sight or sound,
Those who sought death found Life, they found
The Beautiful Glory of God.

SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE

A LITTLE way beyond the village street
The whole wide earth becomes articulate;
You hear no more the sound of hurrying feet,
And clamorous human breath of love and hate,
But the green silence of impenetrable firs
Cries to the Light of mountains white with snow;
A little wind the jewelled grasses stirs
And sings unto the unborn columbine,
Till even the river dying on the plain
Doth with that hidden melody vibrate,
And all life shivers with the same refrain,
Crying, like Psyche, outside Heaven's gate.
So near, so far the Living Waters flow,
So far, so near the Eternal Life Divine.

Just a few steps beyond our noisy dreams,
Outside our gloomy caves of fear and care,
Over our heads the shaken sunlight gleams
In waves of luminous blue cerulean air.
A little space under our grinding wills,
And lo, all heaven in peace before us lies,
Ours are the white clouds shining o'er the hills,
And delicate blueness of all-folding skies;
Here, on the storm-swept slope of the hillside,
Where the pines soar above the populous clay
In high eternal beauty, without pride
To drag them downward from their golden day,

Shall our dreams reach the mountains white with snow,
And Psyche find at last her ancient shrine.
So near, so far the Living Waters flow,
So far, so near the Eternal Life Divine.

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

A DEWDROP in the sun, her radiant mind
Climbed the high wall of the Divine Desire,
As amongst falling stars the night fell dead,
Lo, she was born again of the Dawn Wind,
Lo, she was born again of Spirit and Fire.

Waves of her joy poured backward from the height,
Into a child's soul falling, unwithstood,
Wild dreams by God's great mercy shepherded;
They flooded all the snowdrops with new light
On a spring morning in a little wood.

Here once a garden was, now wintry trees
Pierced the blue sky with long boughs silver-bare.
The child saw earth by heaven transfigurèd;
Wild with strange joy she fell upon her knees,
Her soul rose up in shining waves of prayer.

THE MYSTERY OF PAIN

FAIR is the Garden, you say,
Full of scents and colours and beautiful things—
The daisies' eyes and the sweet-peas' wings,
Cherubim of the Grass,
And Seraphim of the Flowers;
But the thorns, the thorns that tear
Your face and your hands as you pass
The ivy-wreathèd door—
Nay, though you strive and pray,
You shall not tear the brambles down,
Because, some day,

All these must be woven into a crown
For the Son of Man to wear,
Rose-radiant evermore
In green immortal bowers.

THE HIDDEN BEAUTY

I HAVE sought the Hidden Beauty in all things,
In love, and courage, and a high heart, and a hero's grave,
In the hope of a dreaming soul, and a seagull's wings,
In twilight over the sea, and a broken Atlantic wave,
I have sought the Hidden Beauty in all things.

I have found the Hidden Beauty where the river finds the sea,
Or the dark cloud finds the rainbow, or the desert finds the rain,
Where the night sails out on the Dawn Wind and the darkness ceases to be,
Or the Spirit builds a rainbow from whirling rings of pain,
I have found the Hidden Beauty where the river finds the sea.

A BUILDER OF RAINBOWS

As it was willed and done in the secret councils of yesterday,
Out of my dreams and desires was built this fragile body of clay,

And now in the deeps of the air, in a sinister place apart,
The form of my dreams and desires lies curled like a snake round my heart.

Yet is it not greatly decreed, in the innermost council of things,
That every man on the earth becomes what he loves and sings?

Then who can tell the day and the hour when the Son of Man shall arise,
With a cry in his heart that shudders beyond the ultimate skies?

No longer the slave of the storm-wind tossed between fear and faith,
No longer a clay-built body, no longer an earth-bound wraith,

A sinking ship with a broken rudder, lost in the whirlpool of years,
But a passionate mortal invader of far immortal spheres,

A builder of rainbow arches, a sculptor of Light and Fire,
Moulding, out of the Spirit of Love, the Body of Love's Desire.

COMETS

Nay, not the Great Lights of the Firmament,
Calm centres of all whirling things,
Bring my soul balance and content . . .
A sense of wings,

But those that pass in a flash and a glow
With a vanishing wake of flame,
And we know not whither they go,
Nor whence they came.

These are the Virgins who run with their lamps
When at midnight there is a cry,
And word goes out among the tramps,
" The Lord is passing by."

" WE SHALL BE CHANGED "

The snake-weed and geranium flower
Nod in the scented sunshine blithe,
Soon finished is their little hour,
They fall beneath the scythe.

The purple monkshood fine and tall,
The white and golden daisies gay,
Down amongst broken grasses fall,
And wither into hay.

Blue gentian and frail columbine
No man shall ever mow;
Their delicate bright dreams divine
God gathered long ago.

God of the Gentian's Blue
And the Columbine's Desire,
Who callest all things true
To come up higher,

Thou Lord of Light and Tears,
Leave Thou me not, I pray,
After such years and years,
To wither with the hay.

MARY

She who broke the precious jar,
And through the house new fragrance shed,
Mournful and glad as prophets are,
Saw sunrise on the newly dead.

She saw the broken golden bowl,
And the Divine Light, strong and free,
Whispering within each living soul
The wild song of Eternity.

She felt the House of Life grow sweet
With a strange presence everywhere,
Earth's corn change to immortal wheat,
As a dream changes to a prayer.

YESTERDAY AND TO-MORROW

How all the stars did glitter and gleam
Through the gate of ivory, open wide,
Last time I died,
Cradled in the soft arms of a dream.

Through the gate of horn in mercy and ruth,
May the One Light shine from a blue sky
Next time I die,
Clasping the feet of the Beautiful Truth.

Love, all our little lives forgive,
On pain and failure be Thy radiance shed,
Raise Thou the Dead,
Give Truth to all the world, that all may live.

A PRAYER FOR DONKEYS [1]

The Wise Ass turnèd from the hay
Where the Child in the manger lay.
Lord, pity the poor Ass, we pray.

Lo, with Joseph old and bent,
And Mary, on the Child intent,
The Wise Ass into Egypt went.

Yet once again, with God his Guide,
And blessèd Mary at his side,
The Lord did to his Passion ride.

Thrice did the patient beast and wise
Gaze into those strange secret eyes
That hid Life's uttermost surprise.

Lord, whom the stars and suns obey,
Remember the poor Ass, we pray,
In thy Resurrection Day.

[1] This poem has been set to music as a Christmas carol by Max Mayer (London, 1924).

THE DIVINE MESSENGER

Immortal, to whose heavy eyes of old
Fell open the Light's everlasting Doors,
Forgive me counting faults that once were yours,
As a dull miser might count out his gold.

Now thine is all the promise of all things,
And thou a Light, a Messenger, a Flame,
Thy name the Eternal Universal Name
That is the world's desire and the angels' wings.

But once thy mortal eyes shed bitter tears,
Foolish as men are foolish, false and vain,
And in thy soul a ceaseless throb of pain,
Crushed with the burden of a thousand fears.

Thus when my heart sinks down beneath the weight
Of an age-long despair, knowing my soul
Too lame and blind to reach the spirit's goal,
Bound to the dizzy wheel of the earth's fate,

I count my gold, seeing what chains and bars
Held back thy flight, and dream of One who came
And freed thee in the might of that mysterious Name
That echoes from far suns and lonelier stars.

THE DELIVERANCE

In vain, in vain the wild Atlantic dreams
Shine, and shudder, and break on my heart of stone,
And the sea-birds cry, and the rainbow gleams,
O'er my low-roofed cabin frail and lone.

In vain, in vain great green waves storm
My soul in a tumult of yea and nay,
My dreams have cast off the colour and form
Of many a sorrowful yesterday.

Lo, I have had enough of this earth,
I would climb the high walls of life and death.
Why should one crawl through the gates of birth
To weep in this whirlpool of bitterest breath?

I would build a form of my fierce desire,
My feet shall be free of the grass and its graves,
Strong with the secret of Love and Fire,
Standing with Christ on the glimmering waves.

For the rainbow's light, and the wild birds' wings
And the waves have pierced through an age-long sleep,
With a broken song at the heart of things. . . .
No more shall I wander, and wonder, and weep.

"A BROKEN STAMMER OF THE SKIES"

Christ said to God,
When his sweat ran blood-red
On the olive-shaded sod,
"Thy Truth and Love I hold
In my cup of gold";
And God answerèd,
"When the vessel breaks, the Light is shed,
Love on the dark earth deathly cold,
But to thee I will give more than a golden bowl,
My Life to hold thy soul."

THE INNER TRINITY

As the tide rising fills with light the dank sea-caves,
Vast Spirit, deep and valiant tide of Love, arise,
Fill every cavern of my spirit with wild waves
Of Mercy, the One Beautiful, the Only Wise;
Till the clear water deepens, luminous and still,
Be thou the Surge of Love tremendous in my will.

Wrapped in a human cloud, Thou brighter than the sun,
Shepherd and Door and Vine, who giv'st all men the key
To the Kingdom of Truth, where Light and Love are one,
Thy great eyes looking everywhere call men to Thee[1];
Thou inner voice of courage crying on the wind,
Be Thou the living Truth dynamic in my mind.

Father of all Life, when the Sun's trumpet calls,
May perfect primroses glide silent into flower,
From the sharp cliffs may rainbow-prismèd waterfalls
Soak all the humblest grass in an emerald shower,
May the sap rise in the oak-tree's gnarlèd bole,
Be Thou the Life Eternal rising in my soul.

THE TWO SECRETS

What was the secret Pan to Psyche told?
He showed her silent pools of mirrored things,
And down among his dreams of blue and gold,
The image of her own translucent wings.

Now has she flamed forth on her way alone,
Her sad voice cries no more in every storm,
Her wild wings waft her unto heights unknown,
And vibrant rhythms of Eternal Form.

Yet still life holds that dream-enthrallèd hour,
When a white hush empties the earth of pain,
Split sunlight slants athwart a gleaming shower,
And wingèd Psyche walks the world again.

Then sudden sapphires from the rainbow's arch
Fall flashing down amid wind-shaken reeds,
Faint laughter sways the new green of the larch,
And ripples whisper in the water-weeds.

[1] "ΟΦΘΑΛΜΟΥϹ ΟϹ ΕΧΕΙ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥϹ ΠΑΝΤΗ ΚΑΘΟΡΩΝΤΑϹ" (from the epitaph of Abercius, "disciple of the Holy Shepherd," A.D. 170).

What is the secret Psyche told to Pan
Among the dark-boughed pine trees green and tall?
" Brother art thou," she said, " not slave of man ":
You could have heard the smallest fir-cone fall.

As Pan stood gasping at the river's edge,
All things seemed but to mock him, and her words
Strange as the wind that rustles in the sedge,
And idle as the empty songs of birds.

That night at midnight thus it came to pass,
As the moon rose white and the earth slept,
When Christ went sighing over the wet grass,
Pan cried out in his dream, and waked, and wept.

IN THE TEMPLE

" I came to put an end to sacrifices."—*Trad. Saying of Christ.*

Mary, young but very wise,
Pondered many mysteries.

Likely to her Son she told
How she went in days of old

To the Temple with a song,
Praising God the whole day long,

(Soul that prays and heart that loves),
In her hand a cage of Doves!

Two live pigeons prisoned there,
(Heart of Love and soul of prayer!)

How the old indifferent priest
Sacrificed them at the Feast. . . .

Did she pray in broken words
For the fluttering dying birds?

Soilèd silver, lifeless wings—
God's pity on all helpless things!

Did she stand and weep alone
By the bloodstained altar stone?

Haply even then the Child
Out of his deep wisdom smiled,

Knowing that from God he came,
To lighten every dying flame;

Knowing he himself would pay
Her debt to the wild birds one day.
. . . . . .

II

When Christ, in the Father's Name,
Into the bloodstained Temple came,

All the Doves began to sing,
Stretching every prisoned wing.

And he said, " The Spirit of Love
Is as a living, flying Dove."

As once in his babyhood,
Sheep and oxen round him stood.

" God made them living souls," he said. . . .
(Jesus, raise us from the dead.)

Did Life stir in caverns dim,
Whilst patient eyes were fixed on him?

None so merciful as he, . . .
He sets them free, he sets them free.

He opens every cage of pain,
He will not have the oxen slain.

The sheep as his own people seem,
He leads them to the living stream.

The birds have heard the story now,
It shrills and thrills from bough to bough.

Lord, of Thee the skylark sings,
Give Life, more Life, unto all things.

ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ[1]

"He failed," I said; "the deed he came to do
Two thousand years ago is still undone;
There is no mercy yet under the sun,
And Love lies dead beneath God's gentle blue."

It is not true; the Doer knew the Deed.
A million years is but a little thing,
The sunshine and the sap of a short spring,
To raise the tree of Life out of its seed.

Safe buried under our fierce dreams of power
The tree's deep roots grow, sheltered from the wind,
For there is One, greater than all mankind,
Who in the soul of each man waits his hour.

Yea, even to our broken world of clay
The Son of Man in Man shall surely come,
Then will I cry to Love who now am dumb,
"Dear friend, I heard thy footsteps yesterday."

MERCY

Mercy came wandering through a man's mind,
Out of the deeps there arose a wind
And a bitter cry, "Here doth Justice dwell,"
Then Mercy knew herself in hell. . . .
"Where shadows dwell," she said, "I cannot stay,"
For she is God and bides in Heaven alway.
Robed in the blessèd human form divine,
She offers all men living Bread and Wine.

[1] "It is finished."

A SUNLIT CLOUD

A SUNLIT cloud touches the mountain peak
Where brighter gleams the light of sunlit snow,
White clouds and blue air
Are all about us everywhere,
The blue of heaven leans down as if to seek
The lake's blue waters lying far below;
So near, so dear,
The Eternal Beauty leans towards my soul
Till Life and Love are merged in a great shining whole.

THREE-IN-ONE

THE Spirit of Love moved on the face
Of the world's blind waters, and man uprose,
And Paradise was his dwelling-place,
Where a River of living water flows.

The Spirit of Truth moved on the face
Of the world's blind waters, and Christ came down,
And the hills were too low for his dwelling-place,
And the stars of heaven too dark for his crown.

The Spirit of Life moved yet again
On the face of the waters deep and fair,
And Love was a-glitter with sun and rain,
And the waves were a song and the winds a prayer.

THE ANGEL IN THE GARDEN

AN Angel in a Garden: what bright dreams
Of lilied Gabriel, and rose-petals flung
By spirits wandering amongst living streams,
With golden harps on silver willows hung,
Do those fair words bring to the dreamer's mind?
Ah no, the terrible truth to tell,
The Garden where the Angel stood
Is no stream-blessed and fragrant dell,

But a forlorn and sorrow-shadowed place,
A leafless waste, a flowerless, haunted wood,
Where even dying daisies find no grace,
Shrunk in the dry and bitter wailing wind;
Blood lies upon its grass like dew.
Yet some will understand
That here the Faithful and the True
Has bid his fairest Angel stand.
Far stars shine near above the leafless trees,
Capella, Syrius, and the Pleiades. . . .

SYMPATHY

When Christ was about to die,
In the deeps of his separate soul
The vail of the Temple was rent in twain
Between the known and the Unknown,
Between the part and the Whole.
Surely he felt their pain,
His enemies' pain, as his own;
Did he not cry their cry,
The cry of the sorrow of them who love forsake,
And cannot find what they have cast away,
Though their hearts break?
O Love, who feels men's sorrows as Thine own,
All human pain
Of murderers, and priests with hearts of stone
Was in Thy heart that day,
When the lost slayers' cry came from the slain.

THE ANSWERED PRAYER

A man prayed, with eyes grown dim,
Tears hiding the blue sky,
"A friend has come to me
In bitter, evil poverty;
My house is empty, I have nought to give,
No bread that one may eat and live.

Give me, that I may give to him,
Water of Life to raise the dead,
The Everlasting, Living Bread.
Give me one loaf for my poor friend." . . .
God gave him all things without end.

THE SINGER

(AFTER ST AUGUSTINE)

FATHER of all things, crowned
With Mercy, ever blest,
Save Thou the linnet's young
That has fallen out of its nest
On to the hard ground,
Lest it die ere its first song be sung.

THE TRAVELLERS

As we sped on in our crazy boat
From the moon a little cloud did float,
Out of the darkest waves of thought
A ladder of Light was wrought.
Behold, the sudden gleam sufficed
To cut a path over the sea,
A silver Road of Mystery
And Highway for the feet of Christ.

EDEN AND GETHSEMANE

EVERYTHING sang together from every month of the year,
When the Lord walked in the garden in the hushed evening cool,
All the daffodils were dancing for joy that He was near,
And lilies gazed up in His Face out of a little pool;
But the man went away and hid himself in rage and fear.

The Lord smiled, a rout of roses came rushing to His side,
Then the mobs of queer-faced pansies began to laugh and run;
When through the young green grass they saw a sudden brightness glide,
The daisies knew that theirs at last was the far-shining sun;
But the man crouched low in the thicket the better to hide.

Then the Lord knelt down in the garden, where four rivers meet,
The daisies blanched as they saw Him cover His Face with a cloud;
He wept, and His tears fell down on cowslip and meadow-sweet,
The flowers were still like dead things, each wrapped in a dreadful shroud;
But Adam came out of the thicket, and knelt at His feet.

BARTIMEUS

Down the inner Road of Dread,
Between the living and the dead,
On through the starless night and storm,
The Light of the World, passing silently,
For a moment paused behind my soul,
And I beheld the whole
Of that mysterious lost and sightless form
Reflected on the outer air. . . .
Jesus of Nazareth, passing by,
Hear thou the blind man's prayer,
Echoing out across the night—
"Lord, that I may receive my sight."

Something Infinite behind everything appeared, which talked with my expectation and moved my desire.

T. Traherne.

NAZARETH

Unto the greater Lights
Small is this earth of ours,
Short are its days and nights,
Soon dead its passion flowers.

Unto Rome's marble pile,
Her Lords of Life and Death,
Small and low-roofed and vile
Seemed remote Nazareth.

Yet not through Rome's high gate
Came singing the Divine,
But that small Door of Fate,
Nazareth in Palestine.

For size is man's demand,
And smallness the earth's doom,
But the Infinite can stand
In a narrow room.

And This that made the sea,
And the great stars above,
Lived suddenly for me
In a word of Love.

Yea, this small earth of ours,
Shut in by narrow bars,
Is crowned with passion flowers—
The Nazareth of the stars.

THE MOON AND A LAMP

A lamp burning in the window on a dark night
Said to the travellers, " God is Light " ;
But the Moon, blazing whitely, on the heavens above,
Wrote in shining letters, " Light is Love."

THE INNER HILLS

I CANNOT paint the loveliness of things,
Pouring clear colour into gracious form,
Yet in my soul beat the caged skylark's wings,
And the huge mountains tower above the storm.

Gleaming they stand, cloud-haunted, near the sky,
Oh, shall I do the Divine Hills a wrong?
Hardly I dare, in wildest ecstasy,
Drag their great glory into my small song.

CONSIDER THE LILIES

BEYOND the Evil and the Good,
Deep in the purple-shadowed wood,
White and red the lilies stood.

In rain-soaked grass on faery hill
Grows the primrose pale and still,
Knowing neither good nor ill.

We who toil upon our way,
Greedy, lustful, prone to slay,
Hating, fearing, all the day,

Praising right, and doing wrong,
In a blind bewildered throng,
Catch a note of some far song;

Dream of one long dead, who stood
With the lilies in the wood,
Beyond the Evil and the Good;

See across our pathway gleam,
Like a sudden silver stream,
The lustrous shadow of his dream,

Who knew not any good or ill,
Powerless to force or kill,
The Will of God being his will.

Beyond our region, dark and dire,
Of oppositional desire,
Burnèd his life's clear fire.

Like the lilies was his will,
Or primroses on faery hill,
Growing patiently and still,

Standing where the lilies stood,
Deep in the purple-shadowed wood,
Beyond the Evil and the Good.

FLORENCE (1920)

Back to the Lily town, the exile dreaming
Of Peace long sought for, and the end of pain,
Where delicate faces from dim arches gleaming,
Colour the world with kindness once again.

Here shall one stand in fair and holy places,
Where, amongst Angels, tired shepherds smile,
And crownless kings, with ivory-lighted faces,
Grow gentle-hearted for a little while.

Here, in the arms of a pale girl reclining,
Glimmers the answer to the whole world's prayers,
And underneath the Eastern stars clear shining,
Light of a Truth more radiant than theirs.

Here to my soul I clasp the humble-splendid
Dream of an exile, battle-broken, blind,
Love that is Truth and Life, in beauty blended,
The one Light's rainbow in a storm-swept mind.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Christ, knowing all things, knew
There were two of his friends who understood
The deeps of his inner mind.
With his last breaths he gave them to one another,
John and Mary, to be the witnesses of the Inner Truth.

The rest might found churches, preach,
Spread the news of his presence through the world
From city to city;
To these two was given
The inner witness.
They, in their life together, were soon surrounded
By all the women and the quiet ones.
Doubtless it was to them that the Samaritan came,
And told her story of the Living Water,
To quench the thirst of all men for all time,
And the Spirit in us by which we know
The Holy Spirit that is God;
Whilst Nicodemus brooded silently,
Thinking of the wild wind that blows where it listeth,
And how the tree-tops rustled in the moonlit garden.
Then Mary of Bethany, the gentle and patient one,
Would doubtless tell of all that she heard
When she gave to Jesus ungrudgingly
The hospitality of her mind.
But it must have been from Martha there came
The story of the Resurrection and the Life.
How Lazarus must have listened when there was a sudden hush,
And Mary Magdalene told once more
Of the Voice she heard, long ago,
In the darkness of the early morning amongst the olives.
And out of talk like this,
And the long pondering of John and Mary,
And the love of the woman who was a sinner,
And perhaps too of that one who was so nearly stoned by the Jews in the Temple,
John's Gospel arose.
That was the greatest gift anybody ever gave the world,
For in it is the Inner Knowledge of Christ.

THE PILGRIM PSYCHE

I LAUNCHED my ship again last night,
This poor old wreck of the world's gales,
Swung out on seas of rainbow light . . .
I was too sad to hoist the sails. . . .

Then she and I crept near the shore,
Where coral shone beneath the wave.
She asked what I was seeking for,
Yet I but sought to cheat my grave.

Then out beyond the wave-swept bar,
Where the green lawns of earth grow gray,
I steered by a strange-coloured star. . . .
God grant we do not lose our way.

IN OXFORD STREET

A LITTLE idle, lonely song, secret and far away
Haunted the roads of all the world, and fled along the shore;
It laughed in rustling corn that grows high up on Knocknarea,
And sang along the sunset waves at windy Mullaghmore.

It darted in and out among the trees at Lissadil,
And whispered in the twilight what the quiet primrose meant,
And flung a sudden call from every green enchanted hill,
And faded far away o'er silver miles of sand and bent.

The little streams have fled from me aghast with broken cries,
As through the din of Oxford Street I walk cold ways of death,
Yet in my soul a sudden wave of starry silence sighs,
Under my storm-swept roof of dreams the singer entereth.

IN THIBET

The masked gods danced on painted feet of clay,
Harsh music muttered, thundered, shrieked aloud;
Demons and ghouls and ghosts made holiday.
Yet one man stood alone in the wild crowd;
He swung a coloured rattle round and round,
His face was strange with love and holiness,
On his closed eyes the peace of God was shed,
And all the while his lips moved without sound,
Yet all the while my heart could hear his prayer,
But who should answer him I could not guess.
Then from the whiteness of a long-set sun
There came the echo of a Voice that said,
" When all men pray to false gods, and but one
Has found the One Eternal, I am there. . . ."
I fell down at his feet as one dead.

APOSTLES OF ETERNITY

" Certain women of our company."

First came, with profound eyes and clear,
Mary, poet and seer;
To the cradle and the cross,
Bitter gain and radiant loss,
She brings strange wisdom, deep and still,
The white Peace of Goddes' will;
She dreams, and waits, and understands,
Bringing a message to all lands.

At sunset to the well there came
A woman without name or fame,
Water of life for every man
Christ gave to the Samaritan.
She unto her neighbours went
On the mysterious errand sent,
Her living water she outpoured,
Many she brought unto the Lord.

To her whose soul was steeped in sin
Christ gave the light of heaven within,
Forgiveness, righting every wrong,
And Love's soul-shattering song;
Yea, to the sinner at the Feast
He gave the Star in the East;
On us, in darkness wandering far,
Still shines in Love the sinner's star.

To Martha, weeping o'er the dead,
His death-defying words were said.
Unto the world his words she gave,
Annihilation of the grave,
Peace amid all our grief and strife,
The Resurrection and the Life.
John from her lips the strange words took,
And wrote them down in his great book.

The twelve still dreamt of thrones and power. . . .
Mary of Bethany knew his hour;
She, who on the Truth did gaze
At his feet in other days,
Knew the strange rune of measured breath,
The inner will of pain and death;
Her spikenard ointment, rare and sweet,
She poured o'er his death-destined feet.

When all men thought that he was dead,
The Light of his new Life was shed
On Mary Magdalenè, sent
Forth with the news of a wild event,—
The first to pierce Death's bitter night,
Apostle of our deathless Light,
Strangest speaker since time began,
Bearer of Christ's great gift to man.

She told how the whole world's friend
Unto his Father could ascend.
There, where all true desires and fair
Can breathe their own eternal air,

Where the wild winds of the Spirit go,
From whence the Living Waters flow,
Where Life trails starry robes divine,
She bade men drink of the new wine.

THREE WAYS OF LOVE

Love that would have and hold,
Jealous and full of wrath,
Cruel as hate, and as old,—
The Love of the Flame for the Moth.

The yearning passion that flies
On the giddy wings of Desire,
The Love of the Unwise,—
The Love of the Moth for the Fire.

Love that is Life and Light,
Radiance, reflected far
From the million mirrors of night,—
The Love of the Sun for a Star.

RAISING THE DEAD

No, not by fierce concentration
On a belovèd human form,
Or the toil of the imagination,
Shalt thou find what was lost in the storm.
Ah piteous, Death gives thee back for thy faith
But a beautiful image, a phantom, a wraith.
But a gift thou hast given to another,
And a prayer thou hast prayed not amiss,
For the sake of a human brother,
Shall bring down from the stars thy bliss.
This Messenger holds all heaven in his hand. . . .
Alas, who will understand?

A MADONNA BY BOTTICELLI

The Divine Sorrow in her human eyes
Out of the heaven of heavens looks down
On blood-drenched countryside and burning town,
Dark with the old incalculable pain,
The torment of the Slayer and the Slain,
The worm at the earth's heart that never dies.
Lo, in her eyes' moon-haunted gloom
A million armies meet their doom.
The sorrow of the whole world is there:
The torment of all prisoners doomed to die,
The criminal's broken heart, the dreamer's prayer,
The ignorant judge's unfeared agony;
The pain of little struggling lives that pass
From life to death unnumbered in the grass,
The voice that failed among the choirs of spring,
Yea, even the brown owl's broken wing,
All desolate cries that wail along the wind
Pierce with sharp swords this virgin's inner mind.
From these she knows not respite or relief,
The Eternal Beauty, and the ancient grief.
On earth the road to Calvary she trod, . . .
Hers still the Sorrows of the Son of God.

REALITY

Thou who hast filled the blue bowl of the sea
With beauty, and the gray bowl of the shore,
Who with the living ecstasy
Thus fillest all things golden to the brim,
Giving to all men what they labour for;
My little cup of metal dim
Can yet hold a burning coal:
Cast Truth into my soul.

DYSMAS

Oh, great among the blessed Angels sent
By the strange Mercy of Eternal Truth,
This man, who was a robber from his youth,
Has lit for us the Light Magnificent.

Haunter of desert roads, the thief who stole
From the slow caravan amber and gold,
Has given back to the world a hundredfold,
Has given Light to the human soul.

" If this poor lost one found the Life Divine,"
Men say, " shall I, even I, not dare to pray?
Shall I not meet Christ on the Dolorous Way?
Better than amber this, or gold most fine."

Of those who wept beside the Crucified,
Three messengers have brought the world relief:
Mary the harlot, and the unknown thief,
And John whose words unto the end abide.

THE GLORY OF GOD

Beyond the sunset, over the sea, a pale green luminous ray was shed.
" Lo, this is the very gate of Heaven, the ultimate Glory of God," I said.

When silver the moon rose out of the darkness, serene and stainless and white,
The Glory of God seemed to fall like a sword on the waves of the night.

But a voice of past agony in the inner deeps of my spirit stirred,
And the sun burnt cold, the moon hid her face, in fear of the spoken word.

" Father, forgive them who torture me thus,"—the great
words glitter and shudder and shine;
And this was the ultimate Glory of God, the Gate of the
Kingdom Divine.

IN THE DOCK

" THERE sit my judges," said the prisoner,
" Bitterly throned, so high above
Mercy and Christ and Love
That their pulses do not stir
Or throb to God's great beautiful song,
Forgiveness of all wrong."
But Truth in his own soul answered, " Nay,
Judge not; but for thy sins, and God's grace,
That brought thee to this place,
Thou wouldest have been as they."

PEACE

FRET not thyself, nor make great argument
With other men on other light intent,
For they too love the Perfect One, who praise
The Vision and the Glory in strange ways.
The lark knows not the song the linnet sings,
The thrush gains heaven without the eagle's wings;
The lake unto the mountain cannot rise,
Yet it reflects the blueness of the skies;
No daisy's beauty does a snowdrop wrong,
Each sings to God her white and golden song;
The fragrance of the mignonette divine
Is foolishness unto the jessamine;
The pale sea-thrift, growing among the rocks,
Sings not the great song of the hollyhocks;
What shining lily or blue violet knows
The secret of the colour of the rose?

These neither strive nor cry, into the air
They lift their lovely forms, their colours fair,
Each pouring forth into the sun's clear rays
Her answering rhythm of love and praise. . . .
What matter if one does not understand
Or see the lamp held in a brother's hand?
Anger and argument are the dead things
That Love into the Lake of Fire flings;
Orange or white, or green, or rose, or blue,
The shining vision of each flower is True.

WATER

WHAT light doth water hold,
Beautiful water, clasping to her heart
All things divine, remote, apart,
Stars and rainbows manifold. . . .
Thus doth the midnight swimmer float
At ease in the moon's boat,
Thus doth she plunge through the fleece of the Lion,
Dipping her head in the gleam of Orion,
Wild to clasp in far-off seas
Arcturus or the Pleiades.
Yet stars must pale, and the night end—
Water is still our friend,
For all the livelong day
With heaven you may play;
Blue sky, the clouds, and the great shining sun,
All things luminous and dear
She bringeth near:
This, this hath water done.

DAISIES

GREEN trees against the sky's blue,
'Twas all the world they knew.
Would it not be well for us
Sometimes to see the whole world thus?

TULIPS

How the May-flowering tulip lifts its cup
To the strong sunlight, and the crashing rain!
Immortal flower, no heart thus lifted up
To hold God's will could live and die in vain.

LILIES OF THE VALLEY

SWEETER than chimes of silver, stronger to compel
Than melodies of bronze haunting the air
From all the marble belfries of the world,
In living rhythms of joy each fragile bell,
Out of its green and sunlit tower unfurled,
Rings in my soul a delicate call to prayer.

THE WINDS

THROUGH all our pallid sea and skies
The wild breath of His presence flies,
Like the way of the wind through a field of corn,
Or the pathway of Light on a living stream,
His footsteps waver and flash and gleam.
His Three Winds, since time began,
Are Love that shakes the soul of a man
As the wind shakes a rose on a summer morn,
Till the raindrops fall on the grass below
Where the little thirsty daisies grow;
And Truth that shakes the human mind
As the sea is shaken by the wind;
And the wind of Life that blows where it wills,
Over cities and deserts and valleys and hills.
They who would know God watch the breeze,
Listen to the rustle in the trees,
See the snow on the mountains above,
Follow the winds of Truth and Love;
Fear not the stony water-course,
Tracing the stream of Life to its source
Amongst the Everlasting Snows
Find the Wind that shakes the Rose.

A GARDEN GRAVE

Men, poetic wise,
Tell me the bluebells are her eyes,
Tulips the lips once clear and red,
And cold cheeks of the dead,
Whilst her white hands and her brow
Are arum lilies now.
Oh, foolish dream and cold!
Her body was burnt, I know,
Gray ashes all her countenance,
Flame her hair's gold.
But bluebells, chiming, whisper low,
" Perchance, perchance . . .
She is not very far from our frail towers;
Though her heart crumbled in the far-off years,
Her faithful spirit tends all lost and broken flowers
With the new love and the old human tears."

TO A LADY—NOW DEAD[1]

When first I saw your curved and gracious face
With noble gentleness of beauty shine,
I thought of starry music and blue space,
And then of colours, long lost, Florentine.

The sculptured splendour of your moving form
Was shepherding my thoughts to light-crowned
Greece,
But suddenly you walked above Life's storm,
Shining upon me from far hills of peace.

And now my heart was lifted up with dread
And exaltation to a Light above
The rainbow's, where life rises from the dead,
And Beauty walks in Everlasting Love.

[1] Lady Mount-Temple.

AMEN-RA

The Daisy in her heart the sunlight holds,
Each golden disc with its white petal rays
Tells of the Great Light that the flower beholds,
Lifted above earth's green and living ways.

So shall our minds hold the strange Image Bright,
The glory of the Spiritual Sun unseen,
In rays of Love round the great Disc of Light,
Supported by frail shapes of living green.

THE FAIREST

In this dark world how great and fair a throng
Of shining things hold lamps to guide our feet,
Music and lovely forms and frozen song,
And cowslips most compassionately sweet.

But there is one thing fairer far than all,
Dearer than dawn-lit waters deep and clear,
The Perfect Love that answers every call,
And from the coward heart doth cast out fear.

"HE THAT WONDERS SHALL REIGN"

Surely he might have fled
Quietly into the hills that night
With his little band of friends, leaving far behind
The angry city on its wind-swept height,
Walls and bright towers and shivering olive trees,
A silver glitter on the dawn wind;
He might have known safety and friendship and ease . . .
He did not go,
By any fear or longing shepherded,
But kept his tryst with Judas, "that all men might know
He loved the Father," even so he said.
. . . . . .

I who stand so far below
The first rung of this ladder, in the humblest place,
Consider with wonder the things that are above,
The radiant wisdom that is Love's face,
The courage that is the golden heart of Love. . . .
Often I dream, though the world is wide,
And full of great and beautiful things,
Nothing can lift me to his side,
Nothing can give my spirit wings . . .
Yet a Voice whispers in my heart all day,
And Light shines through its phantom terrors grim,
Bringing strange dreams to weeping eyes of clay,
Saying, "Arise and follow him,
Fear not at all, he is himself the way."

COLOUR

Secretly out of the earth one night
Slip yellow and white;
Suddenly, without a sound,
Blue rises out of the ground. . . .
What happy person ever sees
Green steal out of the trees?
Red is on us now and gold;
Which of us saw a rose unfold?
Who watched the gradual brightness creep
Like a dream out of sleep?
Unseen, unknown, beautiful, dumb,
Colour into our world has come,
Blue, and Gold, and Green, and Red—
The Love of God—our daily bread.

THE CONSOLER

Not when he dwelt at peace under bare skies,
Nor when he came at dawn down from the height,
With the night's prayer still shining from his eyes,
And all the world was bathed in a new light;

Not when the shouting people branches spread,
And garments, on the ground as he rode past,
Nor when he healed the suffering, raised the dead,
Did God send forth an Angel from the Vast.

But when the stars above the olives gleamed
On Love that reached the ultimate goal of pain,
And his friends slept, whilst only Mary dreamed
That hardly should they hear his voice again,

Yea, even in that Agony of prayer,
When his soul rocked, and every star grew dim,
Charged with strange rapture none but he could bear,
God sent a Messenger to comfort him.

GOD IN THE TREES

(AN UNREAD BOOK)

Oh, beautiful singing thought,
The very poem I sought;
I don't want to read this book,
I want just to sit by the brook,
I want to fall on my knees
And worship God in the Trees.

THE TULIP TREE

Under the moon last night
The Tulip Tree shone white,
And the bluebells looked as blue
As in the very woods they do;
Yea, even on our tiny lawn
A blackbird sang at dawn,
And then a thrush took up the cry
In sudden clamorous ecstasy,
Till God smiled, looking gently down,
To see such joy in London Town.

TO A LITTLE BOY

Oh, how can you want to know the time?
Surely you know
It's time for the fern leaves to uncurl,
It's time for the May to blow,
It's time for the lark to arise with a song
In the blue sky;
It's time for flags to furl,
It's time for Death to die,
It's time for us all to play and sing the whole day long.

TO M. L'E

You sit so still in your invalid chair,
In the quiet room, day after day.
Nobody hears your step on the stair,
Nobody sees you flying away.

You hypocrite, you can't hide from me,
I've seen you flash down a moonlit lane,
I've watched you dancing over the sea,
I've met you on mountains again and again.

Last night I caught you in a wild rout,
Far, far away, where the old world ends,
I watched you tossing the stars about. . . .
I know, I know who are your friends.

WRATH

Once men thought,
Foolish and blind,
The thunder was the wrath of God,
Terrible with lightnings shod,
Judging and punishing mankind
For evil deeds in darkness wrought.
Now do we know the thunder rolls
Only in our own souls,

And lightnings flash but from the eyes
Of the unwise.
Yea, we, soon angered, must confess
That God is Joy in Gentleness.

JUDAS

What all men share all men must execrate,
The mournful sin of Judas, whose despair
Shines out a sign for watchers everywhere,
The target of the world's most shallow hate.
What holy soul austere, invincible,
Treading strange heights on mortal feet of clay,
Has not at one time sold
The gift God gave him but to give away,
Receiving not silver or gold
In payment for the Light Invisible,
But glory, for scant skill
In the task perilous and hard
Of pointing the way over the hill,
The path of Light on the sea,
The moonlit road through vine and olive yard,
Into the shadows of Gethsemane.

SIZE

The Wise and Great do tell us every day
How gloriously those great worlds in the skies,
So many million billion miles away,
Spread out Infinity before our eyes.

Yet does my heart forsake the starry wild;
Quite close to-day I saw the Eternal shine,
Pouring out Light from the eyes of a child,
Huge and remote, beyond the stars, divine.

Yea, you may rake the heavens from pole to pole,
And weigh the moon, and probe each star and sun,
But you will find Love in a human soul.
A little space holds God, when all is done.

MOONLIGHT

This moon, so lonely fair,
That thrills the midnight air,
Shone thus two thousand years ago
Into the silver-shadowed gloom
Of that wide upper room,
Built high above the narrow street,
Where Jesus with Truth strange and sheer
To all men's hearts drew near. . . .
But his friends knew him not,
Nor whither he must go,
Nor why, thus utterly alone,
He knelt down on the cold stone
Gently, with love, to wash the feet
Of Judas, called Iscariot.

MUSIC AND WORDS

Music says, "Awake, listen, attend, arise,
Something is calling from a far shore;"
And the words answer, "Follow the True and Wise,
The One who went before."
Music cries out with a wild chord,
"Lift up your hearts, behold, a Dream, behold;"
And the words answer, strange, and clear, and cold,
"We lift them up unto the Lord."

THE ROADS OF MYSTERY

The road of a new rose, delicate, white,
Up from its roots, deep buried and blind,
Down in the earth's night;
The way of the sunlight over the sea;
The path of a thought from the soul to the mind—
Are the Roads of Mystery.

THE MEEK

Oh, what is the old promise worth?
When shall the weak
And pitiful meek
Inherit the earth?
Nay, in that distant day,
When wrath and pride
In me have died,
And fear has passed away
With its monotonous distress,
I doubt not that this star shall roll
Nearer to its bright goal,
When Gentleness
Inherits my own soul.

THE SINGING BOUGH

Yes, I was born in May.
The first of lovely things
That blessed my sight,
Before even the swallow's wings,
Was a wet bough flashing white,
Swung out against the radiant blue,
Singing the first notes of the great song
Of Orpheus, the Beautiful . . . the True,
The Loveliness that crowns all life with flowers,
Through good or evil chance
Of soul or circumstance,
And holds my hand and lifts my heart the whole day long. . . .
Oh, rapturous sunlit Melody Divine,
Soul-shaking Dream of mine. . . .
Now I am growing old, yet to this day
I still must worship God in the White May.

THE WRITING ON THE GROUND

I READ in the ancient book,
" He stooped to write on the ground."
I thought, " What he wrote who can tell,
Some truth, austere, profound,
Mysterious, inscrutable,—
But why did no one look? "
Then I went out after the rain;
Water like liquid sunlight ran
Over the grass and down the lane,
Singing as only water can,
How he who runs may read
What God writes everywhere,
On the grass in flower and weed,
With white clouds on bright air,
Or a blue haze on a far hill . . .
Love's beautiful will.

THE DIVINE IMAGE

No one can tell
How he looked as he stood on the marble stair,
In the purple robe with the thorns in his hair,
All is forgotten now.
No one can say
Whether eyes of gray,
Smiling in opalescent light,
Or peaceful pools of radiant brown,
(As in Luini's memories dim
And dreams of him)
Looked down
From under the torn bright hair and the great brow
As he stood there,
Pouring Love on the fires of hell. . . .
No one can tell. . . .
Nay, even in these late days,
Those whose keen gaze

Can pierce through Mercy's thin disguise
Shall see the colour of his eyes,
And those who worship Love's grace
Know the strange radiance of his face.
Yea, they who find Truth's pearl most rare
Shall see him standing on the stair.

NEMESIS

In a past life he lied to men, with foolish tales
Of God's great wrath, and men believed his lies;
Now he has grown more wise.
This is his bitter lot,
To speak the truth whilst men believe him not.

GENTIANS

At Sils Maria, on a June morn,
When I caught in the grass a glint of blue,
It seemed that the earth's green vail was torn,
And Heaven was breaking through.

CHRIST IN THE LANE

This morning, through the gold and green,
Christ walked, by men unseen,
But the blue flower in the lane
Said as he passed, quite plain,
"Speed well, speed well, O Strange and True,
We have waited long for you."
His robe in a bramble caught and frayed,
Thorns shrank, by memories dismayed,
Till from his garment's tattered hem
Peace flowed on them.
To hold his Love was lifted up
The celandine's gold cup.

The small green fronds uncurling cried,
" We thought you had died, we thought you had died."
Like Mary's ointment, golden sweet,
The gorse spilt fragrance on his feet.
Whilst like that Angel long ago,
Whose garments were as sunlit snow,
Joyful and splendid the White May
Proclaimed the Resurrection Day.
O Christ, a burden of gloom
May haunt the wallèd room,
But the blue shining out of doors
Is yours, is yours.

THE SEER

A RAINBOW shines in my mind,
I weep with the joy of its gracious form,
Made of water and colour and air, on fire
With the song of a skylark, singing high
In a blue dazzle of sky.
Men lost in the storm
Dream that all vision is empty desire;
Men say I am blind,
They see not my great arch built out of air,
Belovèd and only Fair.

OLD AGE DRAWING NEAR

" WHAT will you do when you're old? "
" I'll dance with joy on the starry wild,
I'll sing to the moon,
And shout to the sun,
And mock at the languid afternoon,
And steal fruit from the brambles, and run
To plunder the rainbow's gold,
I'll be again as a little child,
That's what I'll do when I'm old."

" But if you're helpless grown,
Weary, in pain? "
" All the gay world divine
Still shall be mine,
Sunshine and rain,
And wild roses blown
In my dream, in my prayer."
" But when the twilight ends? "
" Shine out, O friend of friends,
Give Life's new glittering whole,
Love strong as the swallows' wings,
All wild truths and beautiful things,
To a child's frightened soul
That peers through the secret door, the door in the air."

THE WONDERFUL HOUR

Under a high-set tree
I spent a wonderful hour,
Dreaming of the green life,
The long growth, the difficult strife,
The strength and balance hard to attain,
Through joy of the sun and life of the rain,
The unconquerable ecstasy
And triumph of the white flower.
Then the new adventure high and rash,
The tree's life, undaunted, upward-soaring, mute,
Culminating in the Red Fruit,
The berries of the Mountain Ash.

PRAYER

Shadows and lights o'er the mountains pass,
The wind sweeps over the flowery grass,
Till the forms of the flowers pass away
Into a host of coloured gleams,
With a sound as of rushing streams. . . .
We go to Church every seventh day,
He went up into the hills to pray. . . .

THE SUNSHINE FALLS

The sunshine falls in mystery
On the white clouds and snow more white,
It is a glory on the sea,
And in the meadows light.

O Love, cast not thy rays alone
On the High Spirit's snow-clad towers;
O'er dark seas build thy great white throne,
And be our Light among the flowers.

SALVATOR MUNDI

I gave up all things, and behold all things came and
begged to be mine,
Mine is the life of the rainbow, the river, the corn, and
the vine,
I shine from stars, I flow in streams, I rise up from the
earth in trees,
My vision, enthroned beyond all dreams, shines over a
thousand seas.
My writing glitters in cloud and shower, the blue skies
are my scroll,
My face is mirrored in every flower, my mind in every
man's soul.
My Spirit is that thin golden air, still brightness, or
wandering wind,
Love that flows o'er the wild seas in prayer, or life that
enfolds the mind.
It shelters the lonely dreams of men, and holds up the
skylark's wing,
For deep in my boundless heart is the heart of every
living thing.
I give my Dream to the outcast, the slave, or the king on
his throne,
I give my soul to the beggar, I go forth from myself
alone.

The sun and the moon and the stars I give, and I grudge
to none,
I give the whole Glory of God to every man under the
sun;
For through my soul there flows the Love that has built
up the earth and sky,
And set in the heart of dust and stone a glory that
cannot die,
And made a road for the tides beneath, and the wonderful
moon above,
And the wind-driven hearts of foolish men, in the calm
Heart of Love.
Sunlight and starlight are my dreams, and the twilight
deep and still,
For I have given my will to God, and mine is God's dear
will.
Mine is the Dream and the Splendour, the broken parts
and the whole,
For I have given my love to God, and my soul is Love's
wild soul.

SECRET WATERS

Lo, in my soul there lies a hidden lake,
High in the mountains, fed by rain and snow,
The sudden thundering avalanche divine,
And the bright waters' everlasting flow,
Far from the highways' dusty glare and heat.
Dearer it is and holier, for Christ's sake,
Than his own windy lake in Palestine,
For there the little boats put out to sea
Without him, and no fisher hears his call,
Yea, on the desolate shores of Galilee
No man again shall see his shadow fall.
Yet here the very voice of the one Light
Haunts with sharp ecstasy each little wind
That stirs still waters on a moonlit night,
And sings through high trees growing in the mind,

And makes a gentle rustling in the wheat. . . .
Yea, in the white dawn on this happy shore,
With the lake water washing at his feet,
He stands alive and radiant evermore,
Whose presence makes the very East wind kind,
And turns to heaven the soul's green-lit retreat.

EVERYMAN'S GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN

I HAVE been Fear, and Desire, and Hate, caught in Earth's flying zodiac zone,
Endlessly treading the wind-swept path, driven from sign to flaming sign,
I have been Vanity, Pain, and Death, changed and builded and overthrown,
Yet once for a moment I, even I, was Love; steadfast this light doth shine
For him who would stand in truth beyond earth's glittering zodiac way,
A branch of the Tree of Life eternal, the changeless and star-laden vine,
Truth, Beauty, and Love, for ever and ever, to-day and yesterday.

"YET A LITTLE WHILE"

So long ago, so far away,
Such weary lengths of time and space
Between this day and the other day
When the world saw thy face.

Such sighing winds, such wells of tears
Such centuries of fear and pain,
Such sandy miles of desolate years,
Before we see thy face again.

" A little while," oh, promise strange,
The Love that in our souls once shone
Has vanished down dim ways of change,
We know not whither thou hast gone.

Some say a bright and distant star
Thou shinest in the heavens above;
Nay, there is no more near nor far
In God's enfolding soul of Love.

There is the Mystic Garden Fair,
The Tree of Life, the shining stream,
By crystal waters thou art there,
Close to our hearts, it is no dream.

There is the place from whence Life came,
There is the fire Prometheus stole,
There is the little holy flame
That burns in every living soul.

And there are rainbows and sea-shells,
And light, and wings, and flowers,
And every blessèd dream that dwells
Wistfully in this world of ours.

. . . . .

Oh, glorious divine ascent,
And simple secret marvellous,
This is the Place to which he went
That he might come again to us.

For Love is that Diviner air,
The Breath of Life, the Rainbow Fire,
The goal of all things unaware,
God's soul, and purpose, and desire.

And Love is his eternal fate
Who takes Love for his guide.
Lo, at his touch the barrèd gate
Of heaven opens wide.

Thus very near our eyelids dim
The central Glory flames and swings,
And Cherubim and Seraphim
In emerald splendours bathe their wings.

Here in God's Love alone we live,
This is the key of the lost door.
Yea, he who knows how to forgive
Shall wander down the years no more.

And he who clasps on earth the hand
Of one who might have been his foe,
Does for a moment understand
Whither he too must go.

Deep in his soul Light whispers clear,
From the struck rock the torrent flows,
All streams are living waters dear, . . .
All deserts blossom as the Rose.

A little while,—soon, soon, perchance,
The Road of Dust and Tears may seem,
In the Glory of Love's countenance,
But a dark tunnel through a dream.

The more mystical amongst the Alchemists of the Middle Ages were inspired by a deep faith in the Divine Transmutation of Life. . . .

Ancient Indian philosophy became a religion to millions through its insistence on the Law of Evolutionary Re-birth and its endless search for the Narrow Way of Deliverance from the bondage of earth. . . .

Thus do the Himalayas and the Alps reflect, at different angles, rays from the One Light.

THE HOUSE OF THREE WINDOWS

Of God we know naught, save three acts of will :
Life that vibrates in every breathing form,
Truth that looks out over the window sill,
And Love that is calling us home out of the storm.

THE HOUSE OF THREE WINDOWS

LORD, in thy glamoured house of sun and shining air,
When all the green built walls are white with the white
may,
And wandering bluebells weave bright carpets everywhere,
Whilst overhead where the blue ends no man can say,

Strange Builder, let me not forget thy windows three:
Whiter than may boughs, bluer than blue skies, high set
Are thy three shuttered lattices of ecstasy:
Open the windows for me, let me not forget.

THE CRUCIFIX

ἔμβα, ἔμβα, κατακλαίουσα—

LISTEN, O Jove of the thunder,
Hermes with light wings shod,
Osiris, Isis, Serapis,
Children of power and delight,
Zeus in the ether hiding,
Cynthia, goddess of the night,
Aphrodite, queen of bliss,
Was there any need of this?
The white brow pierced above,
The helpless feet nailed under,
The poor hands in pain abiding,
Nothing holding, motionless—
Zeus, come to his aid—
Cast o'er the sun one tiny cloud,
One little gentle clinging shade—

Ah, was there any need for this
That man to man has done?
The broken body's last distress,
Those fading eyes, those bloodstained locks,
To show the world that God is Love,
And Love, dear Love, is God—
Is God then weaker than the sun?
Oh, who shall understand
Love's dreadful paradox
And wild heart-breaking song,
All potent mind and helpless hand,
Feet of ice and wings of flame,
Darkened eyes and shining soul,
Truth with a new name,
Life that is Love's goal,
Love that resents no wrong,
Love that answers every call,
Losing all, forgiving all,
Waiting with a quiet will,
Till death climb the hill.
Listen, O Jove of the thunder,
Hermes with dark purpose shod,
Osiris, Isis, Serapis,
Children of power and delight,
Zeus in the ether hiding,
Cynthia, goddess of the night,
Aphrodite, queen of bliss,
Was there ever dream like this,
God in a human heart abiding,
Emptied of all human bliss,
Bereft of joy and wonder?
Can this blood spilt on the stones
Have shaken your bright thrones?
Is this, then, wisdom's high reward,
The fragrance of her secret rose—
The hidden meaning in her eyes?
" Trust Love in all things, turn the other cheek,
Into its sheath thrust thou the sword,

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CALIFORNIA

Resist not evil, love thy foes,
Dare to be numbered with the weak."
Oh, terrible logic of the unfaltering skies
That shrinks not from this dreadful gain,
Life, a shrieking storm of pain,
Love surrounded by derision,
Truth crowned with thorns—
Was this the goal of the wise star?
Is this the way divine?
Can any heavenly splendour shine
Thus far, so far
From the bright roads men's dreams have trod?
Yea, this is the power and the glory
And the everlasting story;
Yea, this is the Light and the Vision,
This is the Image of God.

THE HIDDEN ONE

He is so silent that I can always hear him,
He is so beautiful that I could never fear him,
So beautiful that I cannot see him at all:
He is so selfless that he is everywhere,
He does not deny himself to any sparrow's call,
He cannot forget to answer even my foolish prayer.

A ROUND PEBBLE FROM THE BROOK

These submerged stones how still they lie
Under the stream,
Whilst the bright torrent hurries by,
The rushing waters flow and gleam
Like the white garments' swaying hem
Of Him who lit the starry sky,
For ever passing, moulding them,
Amid the rhythmic chorus of all things,
And shouting suns and planets whirling fast,
And the great stream of dancing singing change,

Till they become at last,
As years and centuries swing by,
One with the meteor and the thunder-stone,
One with the One who cannot dream alone.
And when the Flute-player, the Fair, the Strange,
Calls life out of her wallèd Garden of dim years,
To dance her way into the lightning-wingèd spheres,
And the green earth sings clear with all her lands
" Death is no more," and the trees clap their hands,
And the flowers cry, " Now there are no more graves,"
But, " Glory to God in the highest," thunderous ocean sings,
Till the Mountains rise in a great giant throng
And fling wild Rhythms to the winds and waves,
" Peace and goodwill to men and we as they,"
Torrent and tide rejoice, high rock, steep waterfall
Join in the chorus, answer to the call.
Through the wide world, thus whirling to and fro,
Strophe and antistrophe echoing go,
" Glory to God, peace and goodwill to all "—
In that far day when Life waves flaming wings,
No smallest step in the dance shall stumble or fail,
No note be lost in the scale,
No little silence do the Music wrong,
Yea, even the stones, least of Immortal things,
Shall join that song.

NEW YEAR (1926)

I HAVE come forth from dark distress
Into the singing light again,
The ancient lilt of loveliness
Pours onward flooding through my brain.

A dweller in dim corridors
And caverns of a twilight land,
Now have I found the windy shores,
The living waves, the yellow sand.

Great treasure in my hand I hold,
A bright shell found in that dark cave,
Sea splendour built up fold on fold
By rushing tide and breaking wave.

I run, I sing, I swim, I dive,
I fly along the dawnlit wind,
I am alive, alive, alive,
High tide and sunrise in my mind.

THE RECONCILER

STARTLED we were, arrested, strange, aghast,
Following the coffin down the churchyard way,
Beneath our feet the abyss had opened vast,
And clay was horrified, looking at clay.

But suddenly a flower arose and sang
And all the grass was full of crocus blooms,
Down in their roots the very bluebells rang,
And horror fled away among the tombs.

Then Spirit took dear Beauty by the hand,
And wandered through our souls in joy and grace,
And lo . . . white sunrise over a dark land,
And Spirit gazing into Spirit's face.

TO E. G. R.

ALL lights are quenched, all joys in darkness drown,
The fog lies heavy on the breathless town,
Ah, come with me and breathe the sunny air
In Jacob Boehme's Garden of roses fair.

Behind the smoke bright towers soar up sublime,
Entombed the unborn flowers wait their time,
Gabriel doth hold a Lily, not a sword,
Are we not guests at the mysterious board?

The River of Life is running strong and free,
White is the May, and all the hyaline sea
Shines suddenly with Christ's mysterious smile . . .
Sit by this window, let us watch awhile. . . .

A MUSICIAN

(Parsifal)

The shadow of Christ lay heavy on the wall
Of his mind's secret-haunted inner cave,
As on an Atlantic cottage hearth might fall
The shadow of a sunset-lightened wave. . . .

O subtle rhythm, shadow woven spell . . .
O wandering wave from the lost ocean vast,
Singing the dream his lips could never tell . . .
Unveil, strange music, the forgotten past.

THAT THEY MAY BE ONE

With all the joy of the world I rejoice,
With all the sins of the world I repent,
With all men's dear forgiveness I forgive,
With all the light of the world I give thanks,
With all the longing of the world I pray,
With all the love I love, with all life I live:
Lo, we are all one heart, one soul, one voice.
Rejoice, rejoice, free of the shining ranks
That breathe together God's bright mutual air,
Dull soul that could be lonely yesterday.
Now have I found, far down beneath my mind,
God's utter friendliness in all mankind.
There is the sound of many waters heard
In the one voice, as I stood in a dream,
Men's souls like waves the sea of being stirred,
And lo, beneath the ripples' glint and gleam,
Translucent unity was everywhere.

THE DISCIPLE

To stand at his side on the grass,
To take from his hand the broken bread
Of Beauty, and give it to all who come,
Crying out to the folk that pass,
" Here are the hills and the seas,
The fair flowers and the tall trees:
Take the Bread that all dreamers crave,
Waste not one delicate crumb,
Let not a rose-petal fall "—
Nay, better to say, " In his name
I give you the spirit of all these things,
Here is love that is flowers, love that is wings,
Life like a dancing flame,
Life like a singing wave,
Truth strong-rooted as hills and trees,
All these are love, all these,
God over all, and in all."

LIMITATIONS

I CAN hear but one dream crumble, one voice cry, one sparrow fall,
Yet I can see a flock of birds, I can watch a hundred wings—
Is there no man can feel each sorrow, and answer every call?
Why can one hear but one thing at a time, and see a hundred things?

There is peace in the sun's still shining, but Truth in the icy blast
Shatters the heart of the hungry, passing the fortunate by—
He whose soul is pierced by the arrow that flieth out of the vast
Shall hear each sparrow fall, each mourner weep, each dumb thing cry.

THE SECRET SHARER [1]

O COLOURED torch of sea-born poetry that falls
Into the hidden deeps unlit by any sun,
The ultimate and blind abyss of a man's soul,
Showing how love and pity once broke the prison walls
Of personality, and love was strangely one
With the belovèd outcast, the dear murderer.
Amid the surge and solitude of the sea's strife,
Where beneath wind and wave wild tides of being stir,
These travellers of the world have found their goal.
Deep in submerged and hidden caverns of the heart,
These lovers of the sea have found the Life of Life . . .
We thrill to the great truth, we children of the night,
And cannot see the Light of Light, and call it "Art."

THE CRIMINAL

NOUGHT do we know of all his wandering
Save that he did some dark and dreadful deed
And suffered death for it; and this strange thing,
This Rapture, for a criminal was decreed,
Of all the millions dying and the millions dead,
On him alone should fall the sun's last ray,
Only to him in human words be said,
"Thine the lost garden ere the close of day."
Whilst still there fell before the set of sun
On Golgotha long shadows of cross bars,
Behold the Sinful and the Sinless One
Together trod strange roads beyond the stars.

THE LAST KISS

STRANGELY the Scripture saith,
But one of his friends did Love allow
To go straight to his death
With Christ's last kiss still shining on his brow,

[1] Story by Joseph Conrad.

For all the world to see . . .
By that crown of thorns in his hair,
The Angels everywhere
Guessed at the traitor's inner tragic loyalty.

LOVE

Love goes the whole world round,
Knowing no bound
Love comes in the end to all:
Christ went to prepare a place
In God's beautiful grace
For Judas and for Pilate as for
John and Paul.

ENEMIES

One cried for justice in God's name.
Into God's presence we came,
The injurer and the injured . . .
Which was which I know not,
For when together we prayed,
Together we both forgot.

MYTHS

(THE EARLY CHRISTIANS REPRESENTED CHRIST AS ORPHEUS OR HERMES)

Once Orpheus wandered o'er the plains of Thrace,
Through field and wood his lovely Lyre rang,
Till shyest folk and wild in every place
Heard and took courage from the song he sang.

Once Hermes like a shepherd led his sheep,
The souls of men, by the dark river bank,
Where vengeance rose out of the muddy deep,
And life and joy through those dead waters sank.

Thou Orpheus, all life answers thy wild call,
Thou Hermes, to thy piping shepherd wise,
The dream of Love, the fairest dream of all,
Out of thy living waters shall arise.

The Lyre of Orpheus doth in heaven gleam,
The staff of Hermes in the ancient scroll,
But lo, thy voice in every wind and stream,
And thy great deed in every living soul.

HIGHER CRITICISM

I

So Mark thought this of him, reading in an older book,
And Luke read Mark, and John perhaps read all,
And made a beautiful story out of his mind . . .
Ah, what does it matter, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John,
Catching the gleams that from his splendour fall,
Whilst his clear voice is still in every wind
Of this sad world; to know him you but look
Into the Love of God. Deep in my spirit and yours
Burns the One Light; surely there are open doors
Between man's soul and God, surely he is not gone
From us, he is as near, as known, as wildly dear
To you and me, as to John, Luke, or Mark.
That image in their minds, mysteriously fair,
Is but a lovely picture painted on the dark
Wall of a cave, a human heart like yours or mine.
What then are all our images?
Love that can dare
The supreme hardihood, the great adventure, knows
The friend invisible to mortal eyes,
The strange land gleaming in the sunset skies,
The unknown harbour for the battered sail,
Beyond men's dreams of anger and rebuke,
The secret of the white unfaltering snows,
The opened gate of heaven, the lifted veil . . .
What more had Matthew, Mark, or John, or Luke?

Yet must we love these pictures painted on the wall
Of every brother's mind, however worn or faint.
For everywhere he passed and let his shadow fall
Some flower grew, some dream arose, some light was shed.
Ah, how shall we restore lost outlines, fading paint—
How shall we know which were the words he really said,
Entangled in men's fancies, memories, faults, desire
That turns all things to its own likeness, foul or fair?
As easy tell the moonlight shining on the waves
From the sea's darkness, or the stars' far-coloured fire
From broken shadows wandering in night-haunted caves.
Where love is perfect, full, unfaltering, he is there.
Love fills the lost and broken outlines of his face,
Yea, all the light in all this world of ours is one.
Mercy is his whole soul, God has no other grace,
Do we know Light from darkness, we who have seen the Sun?

THE MOURNER

I MET a curious philosopher
Who said, " Men vainly dream themselves bereft, forlorn.
Black clothes, not sorrow, makes them weep,
And weeping makes them mourn."
I could but smile at her,
For when I heard that one I loved was dead,
My clothes were russet red,
I did not weep or sigh,
I still walked smiling in the light,
But grief, like a great iceberg, piled up mountains high
On an unspent volcano's broken crown,
Did choke and freeze and smother down
Back to the darkness of primæval night,
The underground abyss from whence it came,
An inner fount of flame.

SYMBOLS

In a vision of delight
I saw heaven last night,
And all the people of the earth were there—
Golden harps by the golden air
Swept into rhythms of light and flame
Rang out the everlasting name,
    All names above;
And every soul was casting down
The Crown of Life, the Victor's Crown,
Before the great white throne of living Love.

IF ONE KNEW

Ah, if you only knew
Who walks among the flowers
Through the long night hours,
Makes the poppies' dreams come true,
Paints the gentian that strange blue,
    Pours out the dew.

Ah, if you could but know
Who it was last night who came
And lit the acorn's flame,
And bid the lark by moonlight sing,
You would know almost everything,
    And see the wind blow.

Ah, if you could but see
Who calls the birds at dawn,
Who waters the green lawn,
You would find out in the end
Who is the flowers' friend,
    The comrade of the tree.

NOVEMBER

THE leaves have fallen on the grass, whilst overhead
The winter wind wails through dry boughs and sere,
All greens have faded, everything is dead,
With the dead year.

Nay, see on every bough the unborn buds vibrate,
Already their hearts flame with life's most vivid hue,
Already Spring is waiting at the gate,
All things are new.

THE POET TO HIS AMBITION

O VANITY, who diggest in my soul
For those lost words and splendid, go thy ways,
Take with thee thy shrill trumpet, thy bright scroll,
I will not sell my life for any praise.

Behold another digger sighing stands
Beside me, she shall have thy spade.
Dear Love who digs for Truth with humble hands,
All Life and Light are thine, come to my aid.

POSTHUMOUS

O FADED leaf, what is it to you
Though men should say
This is the flower the sun shone through,
Living gold and translucent blue,
But yesterday?

Rather a dream of the Voice Divine
On some far day,
" O little branch of the great Vine
Your soul is my sunshine,"
Might not God say?

A LONDON FOG

Black night is over all, the sun
Is seen of none,
Veiled by the soot from our own chimneys sent
Lost the Bright Firmament . . .
The fog has reached my mind.
Alas, the wild desires blazing high
Have filled with smoke that sky
To hide from my inner sight
The Light of Light.

Yet far from here, great golden-wingèd gleams
Shine upon shining waters, and palm trees
Cut the clean sunlit air radiant with dreams
That haunt the shores of coral-ringèd seas.
Oh, the green branches and the golden air
For those who dare, for those who dare . . .
O God, send à great wind . . .
A strong heart and a voyage fair,
Some day I shall be there,
And sunlight in my mind.

THE MIRACLE

Dry and dropped on the road I found
A violet root: I dug a hole
With my hands in the loose ground
By the wayside, and planted it
Near where a wild white strawberry grew.
I said " I leave it dear to you."
I said " God's light is in its soul,
Soon we shall see a shining flower. . . ."
All dry sticks mocked my little wit . . .
To-day I found a violet, sunlit.

AT PUDSEYS

All night the waves of darkness broke about my head,
I prayed for sleep in vain, none seemed to hear my words.

Yet God who knows all deepest needs gave me instead
Dawn in the primrose garden, and the songs of birds.

THE MAY TREE

Where my feet pass
The celandine shakes in the wind.
" O golden dream of the grass,
Thou art dear to my mind."

But where the may tree fills the whole
Of the blue sky with her frail flight,
White petals fall into my soul
In a new cradle song of light.

" Thy trunk hath many storms withstood,
Sharp thorns have thrust thy leaves apart,
O thou white dream of the green wood,
Thou hast broken my heart."

SAINT SEBASTIAN

Bound to a tree he stands,
Riddled with arrows raining thick and fast,
From the fierce hands
Of his own legion sped,
Yet by the inner Light, the radiance vast
Uplifted, comfortèd;
So doth the Soul
Writhe in agony, stabbed by darts
Of its own judgments, angry deeds, and hate,
Life's armoury for piercing other hearts.
But all the while
The Spirit calm, unpierced, and whole,
Gazes into heaven with a smile

Invincible, beyond the avenging fate,
In regions where no dream has ever trod,
Seeing the open space,
And the dear human face,
Through Love and Pity near, so very near to God.

HOLY ROOD

Love is the strong upright beam,
Truth and Life the Cross bars;
Strangely, oh strangely, these seem
To hold up the Sun and the Stars.

POETRY

O Song what art thou, fairest of earth's things,
Thou skylark of the mind's inviolate sky,
Thou child of falling waters, rushing wings? . . .
" Nay, but the echo of a voice am I,
The silent voice that haunts the inner mind,
The immortal soul of every mortal dream
That waves in corn, and cries in the wild wind,
And sings like sunlight on a mountain stream."

THEY WENT FORTH

At the twilight hour when snow was falling,
Falling silently over the town,
The Pied Piper came calling, calling,
Calling quietly up and down.
He played his pipes of wind and cloud
Till they all came rushing down the stairs,
My dreams, my hopes, my prayers,
Rushing down with cries of delight
They vanished into the silent night.
There was no sound of footsteps in the street,
They vanished into thin air . . .

They did not stop to say good-bye,
For a moment you heard their voices calling,
Then the old silence settled down. . . .
They went alas who knows where,
Beyond the hills in a huddled crowd,
Through the thick snowflakes into the sky.
Who knows, who knows
Where the Pied Piper goes
Whilst the snow is falling, falling
Over the town?

THE CROSS

Talk not of Justice and her scales of woe,
We know no justice, weighing gain and loss,
Save the balancing arms of love held wide
That cannot sway or falter to and fro,
Mercy on this side and the other side,
The adamantine justice of the Cross.

JUSTICE

To please the Gods great Agamemnon slew
His daughter, raising a swift wind of war
He burnt Troy town, and with his pirate crew
Sailed home in triumph from that alien shore.

In vengeance for the slaying of her child
Fierce Klytemnestra slew that cruel lord,
Doubtless believing, in her frenzy wild,
Justice had armed her with a shining sword.

Orestes slew his mother, in his soul
The Furies rose against his bitter deed,
He clung to the God's Altar, the safe goal
Of those whose sin is by just powers decreed.

Behold, he had done but as they dreamed and willed.
Gladly the Slayer rose up from his knees,
The Voice of Light in his dark mind was stilled
And the Erinnyes were Eumenides.

Thus the old story doth of Justice tell,
And we yet dream of Judgment and of Sin,
See Justice opening wide the gate of hell
And hasten still, dear God, to enter in.

"To please the Gods," "for Justice sake," how long
Shall life and love and joy be still denied,
Whilst in the midst of an indifferent throng,
Mercy, the Beautiful, is crucified?

AN ILLUMINATED MISSAL

Here all men come to the centre of things,
Angels, and shepherds, and travel-worn kings.

Such a bright procession never was seen,
Amongst the Kings there's a crownèd Queen.

Long hair falling on a brown dress,
In the midst of the shepherds a shepherdess.

Breathless and joyful in rapturous awe
All the grand people kneel down in the straw.

Ivory sceptres and robes of pride,
Humbly the kings have cast them aside

To journey o'er miles of desert sand
Into the heart of the Beautiful Land.

By the light of a star they found their way
From what far country no man can say.

But the shepherds were humbler, light shone on them,
For they pastured their flocks near Bethlehem.

And the Ox and the Ass were the humblest of all,
So Christ himself has come to their stall.

Dumbly they gaze with round eyes undismayed
At the Radiant Love in their manger laid.

Whilst Mary smiles in her robe of blue
And whispers " The Lord has need of you."

Round the border, primroses blossom sweet
And a grasshopper lies at the Virgin's feet.

There are bees and roses and berries red,
All crowding into the little gray shed,

Where under the Light of the New Star
The Child smiles Peace on All Things That Are.

TO AN UNCIVIL ACQUAINTANCE

Once did you do, oh, years and years ago,
Down in the deeps of time, a deed most kind
And pitiful; now you have a hard mind,
You have forgotten, but I know, I know.

The centuries in my magic glass stand still,
Your scorn has left me cold, for evermore
I see you kneel near that mysterious Door
And watch a white flame burn under your will.

THE DIVINE LISTENER

Everything sang to him always, for to him all things were dear.
The lilies I think sang of sunshine, God's light in the inner mind.
As I wander o'er field and hill, I stoop down and try to hear
What the grass sang of the endless and mystical way of the wind.

I'm sure the dewdrops sang of the rainbow in heaven above,
Where light in a dream of colour gives itself to the rain,
The waves of the lake sang of danger the cradle-song of love,
And I know that the shining corn is the song of the buried grain.

But at night when the rain fell down from fathomless gulfs of air,
In vain did the tempest shriek, in vain did the thunder roll.
As he stood on the shuddering hillside wrapped in the silence of Prayer,
No sound he heard save the Morning Star singing deep in his soul.

THE QUESTION

You say, how can you know there is a God at all?
O friend, how do you know what poetry is for,
How do you know the snowdrops and the waterfall
Are lovely, or that silver waves break on the shore
At twilight, bringing a great peace with the high tide
Into men's souls: in this mysterious world and wide
How do you know that there is beauty anywhere,
Who know not that you know the one and only Fair?

THE PHILOSOPHER

Life came to him, "Whence art thou, oh untrue?"
"I come from God"—there is no God, he knew.

Truth came to him, "Whence comest thou, Most Fair?"
"I come from God." "No God is anywhere."

Love came to him, "Whence comest thou?" he cried,
"I come from God." "There is no God." . . . Love sighed.

Of all these three, Love only answerèd:
"But I am God," Love said.

SACRAMENTS

For Music's ecstasy thy name I bless
Drinking thy wine and eating thy strange bread,
I pray thy living force of holiness
May raise my earthbound spirit from the dead.

At sunset kneeling near dim waves I pray,
Where dream-entranced with Beauty wet sands shine,
O Hidden Heart, give me thy gold and gray,
Bright Valour, silver lowliness Divine.

But where the rustling cornfields front the sun,
Deep in my soul with that blue sky above,
I only pray, O thou Belovèd One
The wind doth sigh for thee, give me thy love.

VISION

"All beautiful things," I cried in grief, "turn brown and fade and pass,
Even the wind dies with spiritual sighing infinite . . ."
Then the sun shone on a wet leaf lying sodden in the grass,
And lo, the hyaline sea a-glitter with the Light of Light.

HEAVEN

Men say it is a selfish soul
That makes of heavenly bliss
Her vision and her goal.
Nay, heaven is but this,

To shake off the earth's dust
And be the invisible wind,
Content in unseen ecstasy to bear
God's sunlight everywhere,
To the just and the unjust;
And carry gentle showers,
Pouring the spiritual rain
On the earth's parchèd flowers,
Unthanked, unseen, unpraised, yet not in vain.
To be the unknown servitor of the blind,
The nameless unguessed thrall of love and prayer,
The drudge, the slave, the lover of mankind.

LUX UMBRA DEI

Blue and red and yellow still
Paint the sky and climb the hill,
Whilst the wind whispers to the trees
"All the earth and sky are made
Out of the shadow of a shade,
But from the shadow of God are these."
When primroses are in the grass
And the blue waves of bright air
Are touched with the sunset's rose,
Wrapped in three colours everywhere
We see the shadow of God pass
And know what each trancèd dewdrop knows,
What pilgrim glory through the ether flows.

THE ECLIPSE

The shadow of the earth lies on my soul,
"It is but a cloud," one said,
"Soon it will fall from the air
In silver waters running fair,
Unfurling its life-giving shining scroll."
"Nay, nay," I said, with parchèd lips,
"It is my life's eclipse,

Striking the moonlight of my dreaming dead,
The shadow of the earth lies on my soul . . ."
A star sang, wise from her long wandering
Through leagues and leagues of blue light unfathomable,
" I who live free in ultimate space do know
The shadow of the earth so small a thing,
The soul of man so great, ah who can tell,
Pent up behind your narrow prison bars,
Into what sea of Light all living waters flow,
What pilgrim you shall meet beyond the stars."

ASK, AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

Alas, my dream sings and soars
But my Love lies on the ground;
I shall come back from the wars
Uncrowned—forever uncrowned.

Stoop down from thy inner light,
Thou art Love, give me all things,
Thou art the secret of flight,
Thou art the swiftness of wings.

THE IVY LEAF

Only an ivy leaf blown in,
Lying helplessly and still
On my bedroom floor:
Nay, a gift from the bright Kosmos flung
At my feet, a song in a strange tongue,
A beacon from a far rock-guarded shore,
God's token thrown across my window-sill.

ANIMALS

You really think they cannot feel like you or I?
Ah me, I know not; yet one said, so legends tell,
" Alas for him who cannot hear the dumb things cry,
How shall he see the Light Invisible? "

THE LEGEND

THE Legend tells with a strange naïve surprise
When Jesus from the earth had gone,
And his friends were a weeping scattered band
Fearful, distracted and unwise,
How on one soul his gentle spirit shone,
Old, and an exile in a far land,
" A partridge running in the sand "
Could still give joy to the Belovèd John.

THE PENALTY OF PERCEPTION

(FROM EURIPIDES' " ELECTRA ")

O JOYLESS knowledge, tale that must be heard
For thy brother's sake . . . " Imagination
Makes mortals suffer for a stranger's pain,
Thus Pity dwells never within a fool,
But in wise men; not without penalty
Too great a wisdom in the mind abides."

THE VISION OF ISAIAH

WONDER, wisdom, and might,
Faith holding a great light,
One by one singing through my mind,
I watched the great procession wind,
Then some one bade the singing cease.
Amid the hush of folded wings
The glory of the Everlasting Father came
Crowned with a new name,
The Star of Bethlehem, Peace.
Oh, the last and the best,
Fairer than all the rest,
Fairer than all things,
Into my soul came Peace.

THE TEST

An ancient song I sing, a thrice-told tale I tell,
Deep in the secret places of the human heart,
So near, so brotherly entwined, lie heaven and hell,
How shall we know the frontier holding them apart?

Bright vanity fills hell with flames of rapture wild
And shapes of dancing light that seem divinely fair,
Yet thus we know the truth, when God but says
"My child,"
Hell shrieks and fades away, and heaven is everywhere.

INTERROGATIONS

Poor patient words, "when," "where," and "who" and "why,"
Earth's little sighs of loneliness are they,
Idly they drift beneath our cloud-hung sky,
Clay whispers them eternally to clay.

Poor mortal words shut out from heaven, for there
"Who" matters not, into Love's image grown . . .
"When" is "always," and "where" is "everywhere,"
Our passionate "why" unheard, undreamed, unknown.

THE MASQUERADE

O Mystic Christ, how often dost thou speak
From lips that do deny thee, hearts that scorn thy heart;
How often in the soul as yet too weak
To bear the brightness of thy countenance,
Hiding thy face behind the magic vail of Art
Thou speakest with the voice of all Romance.

THE SOUNDLESS MELODY

Pan heard in the hollow reeds beside the stream
The unborn music of his unmade flute,
The willows bowed and whispered in his dream,
The grass stood silent, all the birds were mute.

There was a Listener wiser than Pan
Who stood by a dark stream, where willows are,
And dreamed in the hard hollow heart of man
To hear the music of an unborn star.

SOME DAY

The frost has melted, for the earth's hard heart is broken,
Released, relieved, the gentle grass lies glittering in the sun.
Shall it not come to pass one day, by the same token,
Earth-frozen spirit shall melt in love, God's shining will be done?

THE VISION OF GOD

Into the passionate heart
Of one who dreamed apart,
Out of the blue waters' brightness,
Out of the stars' remote flame,
And out of the dawn winds' whiteness,
The sense of the Holy came.
But to a soul in despair,
Out of the grief-laden air,
Out of the black-hearted city
Where Beauty has never trod,
In a rush of Love and Pity
There came the Vision of God.

ALL SOULS

I

Who loves the blossom better than the bud?
Unto our hearts does not the brown root tell
The secret of the flower invisible?
Who dreams the low tide lesser than the flood,
Or sees no comeliness in a child's face?
Is dawn less fair
Than the bright colour noonday sunshine paints
On the same seas and mountains everywhere?
All souls, you say, what are they but all saints
In the making, theirs is the twilight's grace
Dim haloed in the early morning air.

II

This is the saint's day of my heart, here I say we, not they,
Without presumption, humbly claiming a high fellowship.
All saints shine far above me, all too nobly great
For one whose heart fails and whose footsteps slip.
Rather I cling to all souls, sinful, blind, or sad
As I, yet beautified with great desires and strange,
Weeping or smiling, childish spirits glad,
Men of wild words, dumb things that stand or crawl or fly
'Neath the cold northern lights, under the tropic sun,
Slaves of the earth, yet sons of God, children of change:
All you who breathe the air with me—to you I cry—
Who care not what you have done or left undone—
You living souls be near me, with me, when I pray.
Ah then, no saint in heaven will still be far away,
And God is only one with us when we are One.

THE RIVER AND THE WIND

I PRAYED, but silent were the starry skies,
The answer came to me in this wise,
The sound of many waters in my mind—
The spiritual sighing of the wind
Opened the closèd lids of thought,
To see the Light I sought.
Through the valley sang the stream,
But the wind was part of my dream.

LEAVES

LIKE leaves on the Autumn wind,
All seen things wingless must ride
On the invisible tide
Of an unthinkable Mind.

STORM

A GREAT wind rushed out of the sky,
It fell on a branch set high
That held a yellow leaf and sere,
It shuddered and shook in the lightning's glare,
Swung to and fro, straining to hold
The little trembling shadow of gold,
It writhed and clung to the helpless thing,
Sap cried to sap with a wild cry,
In vain, in vain, in the fall of the year,
Weak and faint was the tree's will . . .
Letting go, surrendering
Silently,
Beauty fell out of the air,
A dead leaf lay on the grassy bank,
Then slowly the wind sank,
As the moon rose over the hill.

THE TRUE WITNESS

He witnessed to the truth, for this he was born,
For this he trod our sun-enchanted world,
For this he raised the dead, and healed the blind,
Hearing God's Spirit when men heard the wind,
Seeing the sunlight in shut petals furled.
He witnessed to the truth, thus his alone
In each man's soul that mystery divine
That is the kingdom of the coming day.
The Tree of Life was in his garden grown,
He is the thing he has, the Truth, the Way,
The Love that turns life's waters into wine.

THE PUZZLE

They walked with Christ along a weary road
And strove against a sense of mystery
And begged to know the house of his abode,
But all he said to them was " Come and see."

O God, unseen, unknown, where dost thou dwell,
Shall not my soul find all her purpose there?
This is the mystery no tongue can tell,
The elusive spiritual city far and fair.

Yet through the ever shifting clouds of change
The answer in my heart still gleams the same,
Homely amid thought's stormlit rainbows strange,
Simple and shining as the dawn's white flame.

I walk with Love on through a weary land,
And strive against the sense of mystery,
And beg to know the goal . . . to understand . . .
Love only smiles and whispers " Come and see."

THE ONE

'Twas a poet who said,
"Truth and Beauty are one
In star, flower, or clod."
And Love answered,
"As the rays so the sun—
The One is God."

MOUNTAINS

Down in the plains, out of a million doors
A million lives do issue, countless hands
Clutch at the world's heart, grasp and faint and fall,
Turning to dust in many crowded lands.
Up in the hills the one life sings and soars,
The one voice echoes from each mountain wall,
With open hands the one light downward pours
Sunshine and flowers and wings and fragrant air.
I wept to leave the mountains, and come down
From Life's high battlements and snow-heaped towers
Unto a place of darkness and great mills . . .
Yet every joy on earth is everywhere.
But yesterday, prisoned in a dull street,
I found Christ walking through the armoured town,
And in his soul the glory of the hills,
The mountain torrents and the humblest flowers,
The fragrance of all springtime meadows fair . . .
The joy of his great message winged his feet.

EPITAPH

I

"You took away my childhood" — "But to give you youth . . ."
"You took away my youth" — "To give you the wise years."
"You took away my life"—"Yea, but to give you Truth, Life without falsehood, Love beyond these tears."

EPITAPH

II

My cup o'erflowed with joy and thankfulness,
God said it is too small to hold the wind
Of the Spirit's flight,
Or the sun or the stars or the birds' wings,
I will give you one that will hold all things,
Life for the dead and light for the blind . . .
For this his name I bless.
The cup he gave me holds his wind, his wings, his Light.

THE DISILLUSION OF EURIPIDES

νεφέλης ὑπερθνήσκοντας—

Once did I dream of the immortal fight
For Helen, golden glory of the world,
Song against song, light against shining light,
By laurelled heroes in the conflict hurled.

Now do I know the Victor's dear-bought joy
Is out of empty air and a cloud made,
For Helen never really sailed to Troy,
And Menelaus, conquering, clasped a shade.

FUGITIVES

As Orpheus fled from Hades long ago,
With my dear love I fled out of the town
Where wild winds blew hot ashes to and fro,
And all my hopes and fears were burning down.

" Eurydice, fear not the perilous road."—
" Alas, I fear these towers of singing flame."—
" Dear friend, we have the stars for our abode,
Light without fire, the Light from whence we came."

" DREAM not to minister to the unwise,
Though but a drop of water is his need;
Between the good and bad a great gulf lies,"
Said Abraham, yet this was not Love's creed.

" Though one from death arisen to him was sent,
God's messenger out of the dark unknown,
Yet would he not believe him or repent . . ."
Love cried to Lazarus out of Light's white throne.

Then Lazarus looked across the chasm and smiled,
To one greater than Abraham he prayed,
" O Love, our God, look down on this thy child,"
And plunged into the dark waters unafraid.

And Dives, seeing hope where Hate once trod,
Knew suddenly the heavenly beggar dear,
Lifted his heart in a great prayer to God,
To save his friend from the wild waves of fear.

At once the blest soul battling with the tide,
The damnèd praying on that baleful shore,
Before the only God stood side by side,
Together in light they dwell for evermore.

But Abraham dreaming his old dream austere
Heard the great song those happy angels sang,
And wondered if the Judgment Day was near,
And why the crystal bells of heaven rang.

" By Love the gulf is dried, the chasm filled,"
So Lazarus sang, and Dives answerèd,
" To tell men love is all that God has willed
Jesus, who loved, has risen from the dead."

JESUS AND MARY

Life's wine was spent, Life's Light burned low,
" They have no wine," she cried
To Love at her side. . . .
In her heart spake the voice divine—
Ungrudging, letting all things go,
Love answered, " What is mine is thine."

She had been with him from of old,
To the servants (the humblest and least
Who wait at Life's feast)
She poured out her witness true,
The secret of Love she told . . .
She said, " Whatever he tells you, do. . . ."

Vessels of stone with water filled,
Great pitchers filled to the brim
They brought to him.
No word of his shook the air,
Yet suddenly, as Love willed,
The Wine of Eternal Life was there.

THE UNCONSCIOUS

A hot dull room, great crowds and flaring lights,
And yet a growing vision of clear sky,
Palm trees, and a far wind-swept mountain range,
Till all at once a girl's voice fell from heights
Serene and unemphatic, effortless,
And melody, like a smile, stole suddenly
Over the music's face, the notes fell one by one,
Cool hyaline dewdrops shining in the sun,
" I know that my Redeemer liveth," strange
That every heart did answer unaware,
Before a man had time to think or doubt,
From regions dim where sunken rivers flow,
Out of some deep lost knowledge buried there,
That rose up with an inner soundless shout;
The air shook with that hidden resonant " Yes, I know."

THE GOOD DEED

"WHAT have you done for me?" God asked the soul of a child:
"I was not good or brave,
There was little I could do,
But a cup of cold water I gave
To the cowslips, and sometimes bread
To the sparrows, because of you
And because of him
Who dwelt with wild things in the wild. . . ."
"Was it not enough?" sang the Seraphim.

THE SOUL LIKE A WATERED GARDEN

GOD made each shell and flower and tree
And granted all life's prayers . . .
Alas, what secret enemy
Stole in and planted tares?

THE MAGIC WELL[1]

THERE is a story that men tell
How watering their camels on the height
Not far, not far from Bethlehem,
The wise men found their Light of Light
Deep mirrored in the waters deep
Of this mysterious mountain well.
On the same star-enchanted night
Here too the shepherds brought their sheep,
Where drowned dreams and shadows are
Far from the stars they found their star,
Out of the deeps it shone on them,
Not far, not far from Bethlehem.

[1] A Bethlehem legend.

THE THIRD ANGEL

When Abraham met the Angels near his tent
Clear eyes and wings divine shone out on him.
Therefore the Rabbis named them Cherubim
And Seraphim, God's life and truth divinely sent,
And to their children's children told the tale
How the great light shone through the mystic vail.
These were the Two, but ah, the third, the third,
His was the name ineffable, unknown,
Not in the tabernacle was that strange word
Whispered, the name all names above,
The Angel known to Christ, and Christ alone,
The third great word divine, and strangest—Love.

SABBATH

As he stood to hear
Lake water murmuring softly far away,
The song of the wind rustling in the corn,
Men asked: "Why dost thou not go up to pray
In God's House on this blessed Sabbath morn?"
Waves of blue air went whispering crystal clear
Through his deep soul, he only said aloud,
"Something greater than the Temple is here,"
His strange eyes fixed on a white sunlit cloud.

THE THIRD POET

Hardly the dim church can the fresco hide
Of life by wrath and judgment overcast,
Yet have I found the Church door open wide
Into the sunny cloister, smiling passed—
O Soul of great adventure, thine at last
The light to Byron's bitterness denied,
The pain of Dante's pilgrimage of pride,
Like starlight in the sunshine fading fast.

What though thy weakness broke thee, held thee down
Whilst men tore off thy crown—
Who loves the sin does most the sinner hate,
Therefore it is written over hell's gate
By fiends, " Cast hope aside who enter here."
  Runs not the world's doom thus?
Deep in the soul is graved the answer clear—
" New life for Dante as for Lazarus,
For him to whom all lovely things were dear,
A crown of life thorn-starred, mysterious."

WITHIN

Thou source of every river, and thou sun
And centre of all light, yet hidden away
From the outside world and the light of day,
In vain we seek through earth, and sky, and air,
For never a passionate soul has found thee there,
In vain we search the fields of day and night
Flower starred, sunlit, for Him whom Christ called Light,
And seek through years of struggle and of strife,
Clutching at straws, the Life that is our Life—
In vain we look for Thee in Heaven above,
  Whom Christ has callèd Love. . . .
Strange Father of that inner life that flows
Deep down beneath the colour of the rose,
And lifts the hills to heaven and lurks unseen
Within the trees' bright aureole of green,
And hides behind the sunset's blue and gold,
And sings in shining rivers manifold,
And waves of the wild air, give us to see
And know ourselves, that thus we may know thee,
To dig deep down beneath our thoughts and find,
Haply each son of man in his own mind,
Thy hidden light, far from the cosmic din,
Where Love walks free of wrath, and death, and change,—
O country starry fair and silver strange,
  The Kingdom of that heaven that is within.

THE METHOD AND THE END

We who love beauty truly, yet can sometimes speak
In words harsh and unbeautiful of our true friend,
(Adoring a far flame to our own souls denied),
We flatter her wild light in foolish language weak,
Lost in the heart's desire, we know not the hearts' guide,
Nor dream to find the method hidden in the End.

Thus many talked with Christ, yet did not understand
Those words that sounded simple spoken by a friend,
Familiar words and homely, heard thus every day.
Christ help us all who will to follow, hold his hand,
Yet know not the great road of love, the truth, the way,
Nor dream to find the method hidden in the End.

FORCE

The light burns low, ended the endless feast,
The rose-leaves' withered petals are all shed,
Gone are the kings; those tyrants of the East
Who live for ever are for ever dead. . . .
Augustus, where is now thy golden throne?
Ashes the emerald-crownèd brow sublime,
No more before thee prostrate nations moan,
Whilst he who had nowhere to lay his head
Has made the very winds and streams his own
And conquered Life and Death and space and time.
Augustus, where is now thy golden throne?
Who lives for ever is for ever dead.

OPPOSITES

That pain hunts joy, and pleasure follows pain
To Socrates was plain;
Mourn not the dreams that fade out of your heart,
When these depart
Their opposite Reality shall stand
At thy right hand.

Grieve not for Time's pale brood of years that fly,
When these have drifted by,
Their unknown opposite thy friend shall be
Thrice-vailed Eternity—
Nay, that which gives will surely take away,
Day follows night, night day.
Chained to a flying wheel, a whirling ring
That to and fro doth swing,
Slave-owner change round the wild circle drives
Our tortured fettered lives,
Shall we rise up then but to be flung back
On the old foot-worn track,
The play of whirling opposites down hurled
To this death-haunted world,
The butterfly become a worm again
And joy inherit pain?
Shall those who walk in peace heaven's flaming round,
Sink back to the old ground?
And he who passes the Eternal Door
Starve in our streets once more? . . .
Nay, by masked guides out of the tumult led
We leave the circle dread,
The milky way, the long unending road
That leads to no abode,
Casting aside dreams and hates and fears
And tumult of the years,
Breaking the bonds and strong magnetic bars
Of sun and moon and stars,
Forsaking summer's heats and winter's cold
Time's mansions manifold,
The Opposite of Opposites to find
In love and life and mind
And clasp the Absolute beloved and strange—
Bright Opposite of Change.

STAGE OR STABLE

In every human life in every age
A solemn play is played mysteriously fair,
Great kings and priests go strutting up and down the stage,
Reflected in a host of mirrors everywhere . . .
Till suddenly, in the lost stable of the inn,
Where captive souls gaze humbly from dim eyes,
All the lights fade and all the drama's din
Into a rustling silence and pale darkness dies;
Gone is the painted majesty of throne and law,
Here where the poor folk dwell, and ox and ass abide,
The Son of Man, Reality, lies on the straw
And Mary kneels in peace and rapture at his side.

THE UNBORN

Lilies once murmuring your ancient rune
Deep in the earth's heart, all your buried sheen
Folded beyond the sight of the most wise,
Now russet sheaths hold balls of living green,
Still veiled you whisper you are coming soon,
To bow your heads beneath the sunlit skies,
And lift your silver ladders to the moon.

THE REVOLT AGAINST TIME

Oh I am tired of thought, weary of memory's grind,
Now the lost past,
Life after life unveiled, menacing lives in my mind,
The terrible load of time inexorably vast . . .
Like a sea-seeking stream that cannot pause or stay,
Crowned with dead leaves, the future flows away
Into the past—the present—ah, the present disappears.
There is no present at all in all the weary years,
And yet I dream and dream; in heaven amongst the flowers
Shall we not find the present hidden in the dead end,
Yea, when the future is past, the present shall be ours,
And we shall know Eternity, Life's only friend.

YOUTH AND AGE

This Phaedo that I work on, glad, but weary eyed,
(As ever and again,
With care and pain,
I search the heavy word book at my side)
I read such years ago on summer eves
Amongst bright flowers, under swaying leaves,
Held by new magic in the translated page,
And magic in the bluebells round me grown,
And magic in each gray and high-placed stone
That marks the Cairn of Maeve above the sea . . .
Dark book of memories and mystery . . .
Round wheels the whirling dance
Of life and circumstance . . .
This strange delightful labour of my age
Was my youth's wild and rainbow-lit romance.

MY CREED

There is no man can walk the narrow way
Of heaven alone, with a great multitude
Of secret sharers come we to that feast.
Rejoice, rejoice, beside the way of peace
The homing swallow has builded her nest.
Beyond the great gateways of the new birth
Shines the high road that Isaiah trod,
No ravenous beast shall go up thereon,
The rage of the lion is faded and gone.
A lamb shall be born with a golden fleece,
No murderous deed shall be dreamed or done,
No jealous fury tear Thyestes' breast,
No more shall Atreus' rage affront the sun
Or blast the glory blazing in the West . . .
The very serpent has hatched her brood
Fangless and poisonless, green and gold.
The children of men and the sons of earth
Are brothers at last and the children of God.

Where love is the heart's wall, love the soul's array,
There is nothing living left out in the cold . . .
When all is said and done
There is room for every man and every beast,
For the Life Eternal is One.
" Behold we have seen his star in the East."

THREE CONSOLATIONS IN ILLNESS

I

Veiled was the face of the unfaltering guide,
The long dark hours were on me, not a spark
Lightened my heart, there was no joy nor hope,
Ashes the glow that once was life's desire . . .
Yet near my soul did something stir and grope,
A little flame sprang up in the spent fire,
A human hand outstretched reached down into the dark,
I knew a friend was watching by my side
Holding in her strong heart through the long night
As in a lamp that dark and hidden light,
Just visible to tired eyes and dim
That wept their loss of the clear sight of him
Who is dear Love Eternal Infinite.

II

PARSIFAL

The clouds came down amid a storm of pain,
There was no word from heaven, no word, no word.
Then a friend came
And played this music, till once more I heard
The singing rhythm of the inner flame,
The darkness in my spirit paled and stirred,
And showed the gentle light of God again.

III

Oh God is good, even when he hides his face
He shows his love in many skilful arts—
Flowers all light and grace,
Roses that blazed out everywhere
Cried of the kindness hidden in human hearts,
And human words made bright the darkened air.
Yes, God is good, from his great heart there flows
Hands to relieve, and gentle souls of friends;
O wonderful friends, your patient deeds and kind
Are the bright petals of the Mystic rose
That grows where the world ends,
The tree of life a-glitter in the wind.

AFTER THE STORM

Suddenly everywhere
Clouds and waves are one,
The storm has cleared the air,
The sea holds the sun
And the blue sky—
There is no under, no above,
All is light, all is love—
Is it like this when you die?

Another and apparently an earlier version of this poem has been found:—

The storm has cleared the air,
The sea holds the sun and the blue sky,
Suddenly, everywhere, shining, all things are one . . .
Is it like this when you die?

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

	PAGE
A dewdrop in the sun, her radiant mind	547
A great wind rushed out of the sky	628
A hermit dwells alone by the lost stream	202
A hot dull room, great crowds and flaring lights	633
A jelly-fish afloat on the bright wave	518
A lamp burning in the window on a dark night	565
A little idle, lonely song, secret and far away	569
A little way beyond the village street	546
A maiden loved Diogenes	118
A man prayed, with eyes grown dim	559
A rainbow shines in my mind	588
A sunlit cloud touches the mountain peak	558
A tale that Maximus the Tyrian tells	288
Ah, if you only knew	612
Ah, push aside the vail of hate and strife	528
Alas, my dream sings and soars	623
" Alas that every flower is dead "	110
Alas, the twisted evil word	284
" All beautiful things," I cried in grief, " turn brown and fade and pass "	621
All day she reigns in dreams amongst the dead	253
All day the city's din	110
All dreams seem but a bunch of withered flowers	275
All lights are quenched, all joys in darkness drown	605
All night I stumble through the fields of light	291
All night the waves of darkness broke about my head	615
Als sie beendet war	119
Amid the glare of light and song	115
Amongst the daisies on the dewy lawn	292
An ancient song I sing, a thrice-told tale I tell	625
An Angel in a Garden: what bright dreams	558
Are not these they, who, since the world uprose	472
As he stood to hear	635
As it was willed and done in the secret councils of yesterday	548
As long as idols stand	157
As Orpheus fled from Hades long ago	631
As the rain soaking down to the vine's root	540
As the tide rising fills with light the dank sea-caves	553
As the water fell sheer	539
As we speed on in our crazy boat	560
At Clitheroe from the Market Square	404
At midnight on the high sea	114
At Sils Maria, on a June morn	587
At the twilight hour when snow was falling	616

INDEX

PAGE

Back to the Lily town, the exile dreaming 567
Beautiful dawn, thou far-flung radiance white 531
Because some seed, no man knows why 409
Because the world's soul looks me through and through . . 299
Behind the scenes, before the play 222
Behold this life's a glorious thing 111
Beneath a mist of dog-wood buried deep 140
Between the mountains and the sea 228
Beyond the Evil and the Good 566
Beyond the smoke there burns a veilèd fire 203
Beyond the sunset, over the sea, a pale green luminous ray was shed . 574
Black night is over all, the sun 614
Blue and red and yellow still 622
Bound to a tree he stands 615

Carve thou thy dream in marble, scrawl it clear 238
Chained to the rock of this sheer world, the Will 286
Christ, knowing all things, knew 567
Christ said to God 553
Cowries among the rocks the children find 490
Cruelty, bloodshed and hate 512

Dark earth of fading leaves and dying flowers 491
Dear life has cast me forth from her gay throng 413
Deep buried dreams dwell in her laughing eyes 471
Deep in that world where pale tides ebb and flow . . . 540
Deep in the soul there throbs the secret pain 251
Dew-pearlèd cobwebs glitter on green boughs 517
Do not be lonely, dear, nor grieve 510
Down by Glencar Waterfall 409
Down in the darkness of his damp abode 147
Down in the plains, out of a million doors 630
Down the inner Road of Dread 561
Down this dry watercourse once long ago 245
Dream not to minister to the unwise 632
Drive faster, the spirit out of the vast 498
Drooping over Ireland, veiled in sombre gray 127
Dry and dropped on the road I found 614

Eels in the mud of the garden pond 117
Everything sang together from every month of the year . . 560
Everything sang to him always, for to him all things were dear . 619

Fair is the Garden, you say 547
Far from the downs and the safe farm lands 489
Father of all things, crowned 560
First came, with profound eyes and clear 570
Floating in pale rose waves the sun has set 466
Folded about my soul is deep content 292
For God's sake, kill not; Spirit that is breath 543
For Music's ecstasy thy name I bless 621

INDEX

	PAGE
For the Hidden One in every heart	527
For years I sought the Many in the One	215
Forth from her lofty spirit the wild deed	201
Free to all souls the hidden beauty calls	493
Fret not thyself, nor make great argument	575
Friend, you enter to your heritage at length	152
From sunlit meadows my tired gaze withdrawn	209
From the jasmine on the wall	113
Gay is the call of the Sower going forth in the morning refreshed from sleep	278
Glory of heart and brain	522
God made each shell and flower and tree	634
Goddess of Drudgery, to thee	111
Great ships glided into the port	193
Green trees against the sky's blue	576
Grief for the noble dead	508
Hardly the dim church can the fresco hide	635
"He failed," I said; "the deed he came to do"	557
He had made of his soul a Temple to hold the Glory of God	543
He in his deepest mind	465
He is so silent that I can always hear him	603
He who seeks God has yet no need of wings	279
He witnessed to the truth, for this he was born	629
He wrote all day, he could not think	117
Help us, thou lonely Dweller in the Wood	425
Her narrow eyelids radiantly obscure	245
Here all men come to the centre of things	618
Here on dark waters falls the yellow leaf	403
Here the Atlantic breakers shake the shore	220
Here the white stars brood high above the austere pines	213
Heroes, from the fields of light	109
Hers is the patient waiting of the wise	471
Hiding in mazes of marble her chin sunk deep in the stone	245
His was the voice	111
Holy Spirit, force of light	136
Hope and Life came to the well	118
How all the stars did glitter and gleam	551
How dull is this vain talk, thought the Wise Guest	530
How is it doomed to end?	463
How the battle raged last night	155
How the May-flowering tulip lifts its cup	577
I am sad with the city's sadness, sick of toil	303
I am well learned in all the weary lore	116
I asked for news of God from the shining sea	542
I can hear but one dream crumble, one voice cry, one sparrow fall	607
I cannot paint the loveliness of things	566
I dare not bend the white rose to my will	239
I dream of one who is dead	510

INDEX

PAGE

I gave up all things, and behold all things came and begged to be mine 590
I gaze at my own form from morn till night 277
I have been Fear, and Desire, and Hate, caught in Earth's flying zodiac zone 592
I have come forth from dark distress 604
I have seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the hill . . 312
I have seen the dreams of the world in a rose that the winds have slain 219
I have sought the Hidden Beauty in all things 548
I have such longing to be home again 111
I laboured and studied and toiled and thought 519
I launched my ship again last night 569
I left the brazen tower on the plain 107
I met a curious philosopher 611
I prayed, but silent were the starry skies 628
I read in the ancient book 586
I saw Blind Justice o'er the Nations reign 527
I sing the song of the river 121
I, the ancient King, and guardian of the city 108
I was the child that passed long hours away 236
I wrote eight verses late last night 120
If I could be one with the waves of grief 500
" If Jesus Christ had not been crucified " 520
If love has lost a wing 113
If, Reader, for these poems you should lack 103
Immortal, to whose heavy eyes of old 552
In a past life he lied to men, with foolish tales 587
In a vision of delight 612
In age-long silence patiently she stands 473
" In all earthly happenings " 515
In every human life in every age 639
In Florence my heart's city far away 528
In His Rainbow Garden, God 140
In liberty of thought 118
In lines thus narrow 113
In the crowd's multitudinous mind 533
In the darkness I planted a rose 302
In the deep world unseen 501
In the dim twilight-haunted garden 235
In the roof the swallow has built her nest 403
In the twilight land of gleams 123
In the world's wars we have no lot nor part 237
In this cold country of the seas 124
In this dark world how great and fair a throng 579
In time the whole of things shall alter 545
In vain, in vain the wild Atlantic dreams 552
Into the passionate heart 626
Is there nothing you care for or dream to remember 402
Is this what it means to die 119
Ivory-gated, velvet-lined 152

INDEX

	PAGE
Joyful and swift, who led	537
Life came to him, "Whence art thou, oh untrue?"	620
Life grows so clear, beneath the dreaming lamp	497
Life's wine was spent, Life's Light burned low	633
Like a wave that roams the sea	105
Like driven cattle groping in blind herds	265
Like leaves on the Autumn wind	628
Lilies once murmuring your ancient rune	639
Listen, O Jove of the thunder	601
Lived a man was wont to steal	146
Lo, in my soul there lies a hidden lake	591
Long ago a spirit was torn from the fire of the opal spheres	246
Lord, in thy glamoured house of sun and shining air	601
Love goes the whole world round	609
Love is the strong upright beam	616
Love that would have and hold	572
Mary, young but very wise	555
Men, poetic wise	578
Men say amid the hosts of hidden morrows hides	514
Men say it is a selfish soul	621
Men who are born to die, whose dreams are soiled by the dust	410
Mercy came wandering through a man's mind	557
Music affords	530
Music says, "Awake, listen, attend, arise"	584
My cup o'erflowed with joy and thankfulness	631
Mysteriously the last hour's opal light	489
Nay, not the Great Lights of the Firmament	549
Nay, though green fields are fair	304
No green and poisonous laurel wreath shall shade	511
No honey for the busy artist throng	401
No man shall deck their resting-place with flowers	508
No, not by fierce concentration	572
No, not in visions or fierce ecstasy	532
No one can tell	586
No voices speak to thee	120
Not as Aurora of the smiling eyes	469
Not for thee, oh Maeve, is the song of the wandering harper sung	195
Not when he dwelt at peace under bare skies	580
Nought do we know of all his wandering	608
Now do men say that though the gods be fair	307
Now is the day of the daughters of Eirinn passed and gone	196
Now is the High-Queen vanquished, she has cast her sword aside	194
O coloured torch of sea-born poetry that falls	608
O faded leaf, what is it to you	613
O God, I thank Thee that all things must end	130
O joyless knowledge, tale that must be heard	624
O Mystic Christ, how often dost thou speak	625

INDEX

	PAGE
O Song, what art thou, fairest of earth's things	616
O vanity, who diggest in my soul	613
Of old the rainbow on the water's face	300
Oh, beautiful singing thought	581
Oh, Bright One, shining in strange light	532
Oh God is good, even when He hides His face	642
Oh, great among the blessed Angels sent	574
Oh, how can you want to know the time?	582
Oh I am tired of thought, weary of memory's grind	639
Oh, Little Human Words and delicate	406
Oh pale discrownèd brow and quenchèd eyes	236
Oh, poor, pale days that pass me by	147
Oh, shining splendour of the human form	512
"Oh, Sisyphus, a weary life is yours"	119
Oh, softly falls the shining leaf	412
Oh strife too short, oh victory too dear	243
Oh, the streak of gold in the gray	143
Oh, tired of many lives and many dooms	480
Oh very near the wide Atlantic shore	283
Oh, what is the old promise worth?	585
On the King's road the Mother of Emerald shivered and shone	541
On these wave-haunted sands the children play	279
On through the iron day each stone-bound square	221
Once did I dream of the immortal fight	631
Once did you do, oh years and years ago	619
Once in the year the ancient world grows young	243
Once long ago in this dim wood	480
Once long ago, secluded and alone	171
Once men thought	582
Once Orpheus wandered o'er the plains of Thrace	609
One cried for justice in God's name	609
One more defeat—and so we've failed again	155
One swallow dared not trust the idle dream	275
One thought has been my whole life through the soul of every dream	399
One was the undivided Holy Light	481
Only an ivy leaf blown in,	623
Others there were who spake with fire and art	407
Outcast from joy and beauty, child of broken hopes forlorn	509
Pain is the price of freedom we must pay	144
Pan heard in the hollow reeds beside the stream	626
Parchèd and thirsty on the river bank	486
Peaceful as evening, white as hawthorn boughs	213
Perfectly pure and pale, a thing apart	120
Plotinus, like a proud and idle boy	251
Poor patient words, "when," "where," and "who" and "why"	625
Poor weary mortal crushed beneath the weight	467
Prosèrpina, who sought for poppies, fell	252
Psyche, the Queen, says truly the old tale	407
Pure gold did Nero's palace shine	482

INDEX

	PAGE
Queen Proserpine, from yonder shining star	285
Robbed and wounded, all the day	405
Round Heaven's Gate the gods have set no guard	415
Sappho said long ago	544
Secretly out of the earth one night	580
Shadows and lights o'er the mountains pass	589
She who broke the precious jar	550
Silver the river flows out of the West—	489
Snowdrops pushing through the snow	116
So long ago, so far away	592
So Mark thought this of him, reading in an older book	610
Some care for glory, some for peace	106
Soul of the acorn buried in the sod	230
Spirit patient and wise	529
Startled we were, arrested, strange, aghast	605
Strangely the Scripture saith	608
Strong spirit, striving upward to the light	144
Suddenly everywhere	642
Surely he might have fled	579
Surely this life is as a flowing wave	491
Sweet peas. The very life of Spring	142
Sweeter than chimes of silver, stronger to compel	577
Talk not of Justice and her scales of woe	617
That pain hunts joy and pleasure follows pain	637
The Acorn is a common thing and small	543
The buried statue through the marble gleams	480
The clouds came down amid a storm of pain	641
The Daisy in her heart the sunlight holds	579
The darkness draws me, kindly angels weep	255
The Divine Sorrow in her human eyes	573
The dogwood's dead, and a mantle red	166
The earth bends to her will, the obdurate marble serves	219
The elm boughs shudder in the sooty wind	287
The Eternal Beauty smiled at me	276
The Fear that lurks in the crowded street	246
The frost has melted, for the earth's hard heart is broken	626
The ghost of Twilight seems to dog	153
The grand road from the mountain goes shining to the sea	244
The harvest is scant, and the labourer	500
The heart of Life is lifted up with eager pride of birth	229
The lamp has gone out in your eyes	257
The leaves have fallen on the grass, whilst overhead	613
The Legend tells with a strange naïve surprise	624
The light burns low, ended the endless feast	637
The light shines on the rich man's feast	304
The long and waving line of the blue hills	215
The masked gods danced on painted feet of clay	570
The mountains tower in snow-built curves austere	299

INDEX

PAGE

The night is dark and Orchil's dreadful hosts 319
The one light throned beyond the starry spheres . . . 302
The pale Madonna, radiant and serene 467
The peaceful night that round me flows 511
The people who live in the Midlands know 492
The phantoms flit before our dazzled eyes 514
The princess in her world-old tower pined 497
The Rich, the Great, the Wise are here, the Living and the Dead 408
The road of a new rose, delicate, white 584
The rulers of the earth, savage and blind 507
The secret of this sensible world of ours 301
The shadow of Christ lay heavy on the wall 606
The shadow of the earth lies on my soul 622
The sleepless light of morning drives every cloud away . . 214
The small blue waves in the great flood of light 490
The snake weed and geranium flower 549
The soul dwells in the body as sunshine 283
The soul who knows herself dreams not of rest 293
The soul would know the rhythm and sound of time . . . 235
The spirit lonely in the spheres of night 287
The Spirit of Love moved on the face 558
The storm has cleared the air 642
"The summary of a good man's life" 145
The sun that flames in the East, the Light-giver, Agni, Lord of the House of Gold 220
The sunshine falls in mystery 590
The swallows flit through twisted branches fine 516
The treasure of age and the hope of youth 112
The Vision fair has failed and passed away 521
The wind has fallen at last, and the daylight has faded away . 235
The wind that blows among the apple-trees 196
The Wise and Great do tell us every day 583
The Wise Ass turnèd from the hay 551
There is a story that men tell 634
There is no age, this darkness and decay 227
There is no edge to the sunshine nor the wind nor the driving rain 527
There is no man can walk the narrow way 640
There is one thing I know 294
"There sit my judges," said the prisoner 575
There was silence for a space 545
There's no shade in the woods, through the moveless fir branches the sunlight streams down 228
These are those brows no life or death has marred 470
These submerged stones how still they lie 603
These things have passed; no more through twilight hours . . 476
They walked with Christ along a weary road 629
They who rise satiate from Life's banquet, spread 137
This is our Mother Eve, who shall not win 112
This is the saint's day of my heart, here I say we, not they . . 627
This is the way of Heaven: you may kneel 133
This moon, so lonely fair 584

INDEX

	PAGE
This morning, through the gold and green	587
This Phaedo that I work on, glad, but weary eyed	640
This was the shepherd boy who slung the stone	469
This was the story never told	493
Thou source of every river, and thou sun	636
Thou who hast filled the blue bowl of the sea	573
Though I lie all day on the green hillside, where the bracken waves and sighs	294
Though the long seasons seem to separate	496
Though they live in a faery land	475
Through all our pallid sea and skies	577
Through silver twilight lily-laden, came	472
Through the garden of my dreams	148
Through the wise books that trouble the world	214
Thus did our swift boat past the islands glide	117
Thus did she follow Art	110
Time in dark underground dungeons brought the pale seed to birth	221
To please the Gods great Agamemnon slew	617
To stand at his side on the grass	607
Turning in blind distress	520
'Twas a poet who said	630
'Twas hard to bear	146
Under a high-set tree	589
Under the moon last night	581
Unto the greater Lights	565
Veiled was the face of the unfaltering guide	641
Virgil said, " O child, for you "	539
Was it not strange that by the tideless sea	247
We who are mourners make no moan	402
We who love beauty truly, yet can sometimes speak	637
What a man does for Christ he does for all	529
What all men share all men must execrate	583
What has time to do with thee	510
" What have you done for me? " God asked the soul of a child	634
" What is God? " men said in the West	521
What light doth water hold	576
What though thick clouds have quenched the moon	158
What was the secret Pan to Psyche told?	554
" What will you do when you're old? "	588
Whate'er I touch to-night I spoil	290
When Abraham met the Angels near his tent	635
When Christ was about to die	559
When first I saw your curved and gracious face	578
When her twigs are bare	401
When I was young	109
When I was young the world looked old	419
When Jacob's Ladder reached the skies	507
When Psyche staggered through the darkness dense	269

INDEX

PAGE

When restless Psyche of the radiant wings 114
When Solomon of old 418
When the fog hangs heavy and chill as death 156
When the world was young and foolish and fair 198
When wise Alcestis, risen from the grave 268
Where is the road out of this world of strife? 530
Where my feet pass 615
Where silver lights and twilight shadows glide 492
Where the Egyptian pillar—old, so old 404
Where the waves in a moaning throng 411
Who loves the blossom better than the bud? 627
Who shall venture to intrude 160
With all the joy of the world I rejoice 606
With sculptured form the porch is decorate 541
Wings for the feet, not shoulders, poets need 147
Wonder, wisdom, and might 624

Ye tortured mortals, cease your cries 114
Ye who in old days dared to wander far 193
Ye who would mould men's souls unto your tyrannous will . 227
Yes, I was born in May 585
Yet once again the barred and bolted gate 520
You are old and I am young 126
You have dragged me on through the wild wood ways . . 254
You hug to your soul a handful of dust 238
You really think they cannot feel like you or I? 623
You say, how can you know there is a God at all? . . . 620
You seem to be a woman of the world 516
You sit so still in your invalid chair 582
You think it strange that I resort 157
You think that I was false for guerdon or for gold . . . 128
You think the joy and sorrow passionate 289
" You took away my childhood "—" But to give you youth " . 630
You whom I never knew 523
" Young knight, go forth and slay 137
Your words are vain 117

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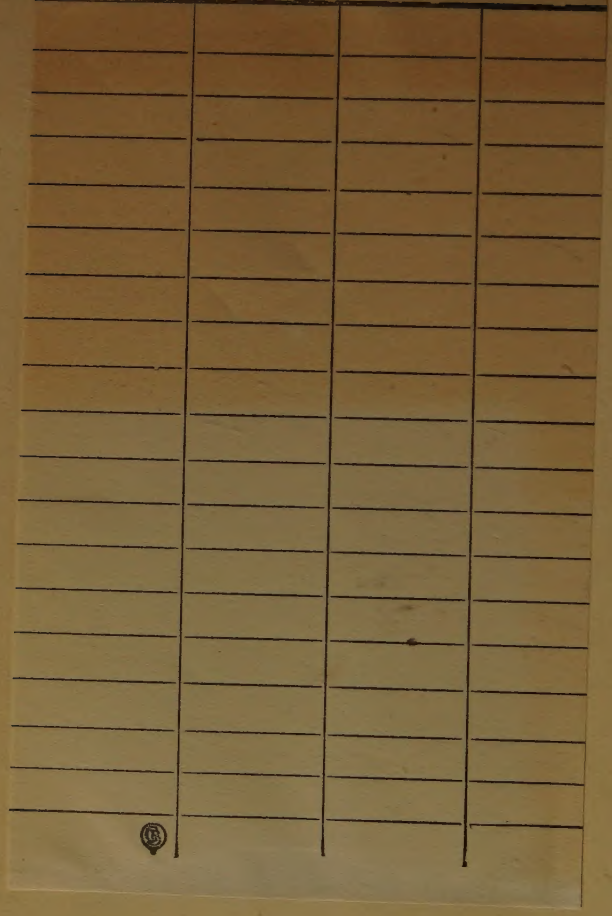

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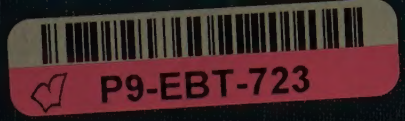
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